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# **Jesus' Sayings in the Life of the Early Church**

**Papers Presented  
in Honor of  
Helmut Koester's Seventieth Birthday**

## Preface

Helmut Koester celebrated his seventieth birthday December 18, 1997. To honor our teacher, colleague, and friend on that occasion the New Testament Department of the Harvard Divinity School organized a one-day conference January 25, 1997. Around sixty people gathered to celebrate our jubilarian, hear several papers, and participate in lively discussions. Among the many interests Helmut Koester developed over the years, the most ancient and the most consistent concerns the tradition of Jesus' words over decades and centuries. Therefore the topic chosen by the Department was *Jesus' Sayings in the Life of the Early Church*, a title that brings to mind Helmut Koester's dissertation *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (TU 65; Berlin: Akademischer Verlag, 1957), his book *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), and several of his articles.<sup>1</sup>

To respect and underline Helmut's attention to colleagues and his care for students, it was decided to invite as speakers colleagues of the Divinity School, former students now colleagues, and doctoral students. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Allen Dwight Callahan, and I are Divinity School colleagues. Adela Yarbro Collins and Gregory J. Riley are former students, now teaching in sister institutions. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Ann Graham Brock were both, at the time, doctoral students who had worked closely with Helmut, either on research projects or as his teaching fellows. All of us are, as it were, representatives of the large circle of students, former students, and colleagues around the country and the world.

<sup>1</sup> For example, "Die Ausserkanonischen Herrenworte als Produkte der christlichen Gemeinde," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 48 (1957) 220–37, available in English with a postscript "The Extracanonical Sayings of the Lord as Products of the Christian Community," *Semeia* 44 (1988) 57–77.

It is therefore with great pleasure that the department now offers these scholarly papers to the readers of *The Harvard Theological Review*. They concern first methodological issues. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza applies her critical reading to the scholars engaged in the latest of the so-called quests for the historical Jesus. The conservative as well as the critical biblical scholar is scrutinized, and both categories can learn from her sharp remarks. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken considers rightly that Jesus' sayings—particularly those preserved in 1 Corinthians—are not properly understood outside their historical setting, and this setting is the Christian gathering. It is in this liturgical *Sitz im Leben* that the words of the Galilean teacher were remembered in an active manner (Ellen uses the terms “performance” and “reenactment”). Adela Yarbro Collins does not write a history of the Christian exegesis of Mark 10:45 but reconstructs what could have been the perception by pagans, auditors, and readers of a logion like Mark 10:45. From diverse epigraphic evidence, she unveils in particular the Greek meaning of a word like *λύτρον*. In my article, I read a passage of Luke and try to peel its several layers, from the level of the Evangelist to Jesus, through the author of Luke's special source and the oral tradition. According to my analysis, the parable of the judge and the widow (Luke 18:1–8) was received first by a Christian community with an evident apocalyptic expectation. It was then reshaped—prior to Luke—by an author belonging to the movement of the so-called Hellenists (see Acts 6–8). Ann Graham Brock is interested in the level of language of the different Christian groups. She focuses her attention on the presence and significance of the vocabulary of “friendship” and “love” in early Christian texts and considers *avec finesse* such occurrences as linguistic markers of distinct communities. Each church had its own interest in the selection of Jesus' memories that it wished to keep alive. Allen Dwight Callahan revisits the *Gospel of Thomas* and by a philological inquiry tries to explain the logic in the apparently illogical sequence of Jesus' sayings. Finally, Gregory J. Riley makes clear that the success of the early Christian mission and consequently the memory of Jesus' teaching was tightly connected with the impression left by Jesus' deeds and pattern of life, and by the underlying cultural resonance that this element of the early Christian witness shared with the revered ideals of the Greco-Roman world.

May these investigations be a tribute to the great scholar and teacher they would like to honor.

François Bovon  
Chair of the New Testament Department  
Harvard Divinity School

# Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

*Harvard Divinity School*

I distinctly recall how excited I was to read *Trajectories through Early Christianity*<sup>1</sup> some twenty-five years ago. In 1970 I had just finished doctoral studies and had begun teaching at the University of Notre Dame. One of the first lessons I received from a senior colleague at that time was: “Elisabeth, remember you are not teaching here as a theologian but as a critical exegete and historian. Consequently, never allow your students to ask what is the religious or theological significance of biblical texts and interpretations for today. If you allow this question your scholarship will flounder on the slippery slope of relevance.” I was puzzled and disturbed by such counsel—to say the least—because as a student in Germany I had not encountered such anti-theological positivism but rather had been reared in the hermeneutical-theological tradition. The exciting part of reading *Trajectories*, therefore, was the realization that epistemological, hermeneutical, and theological questions were also the cutting edge issues of American biblical scholarship. For *Trajectories* set out to initiate a critical discussion and revision of the categories and conceptualizations not only of biblical-historical interpretation, but also of the criteria for theological evaluation.

Most importantly, it insisted on the significance of critical scholarship for contemporary theology and theological education. For instance, Helmut Koester concludes his chapter on “The Structure of Early Christian Beliefs”

<sup>1</sup>James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

with five theses regarding the theological importance of biblical research for today. Here I focus on the first two theses in order to approach the topic of this special issue in honor of Helmut Koester. Whereas the first thesis insists that “it is our task to clarify the various positions of our time in order to be relevant to our contemporaries,” his second thesis concludes: “it is the Jesus of history—and by no means an inaccessible object of speculation—which must be the center of our concern.”<sup>2</sup>

These assertions invite exploration of the contemporary presuppositions and frameworks of exegetical-historical and theological work that govern historical Jesus research. Such a “politics of interpretation”—to invoke a much used but little understood phrase—seeks to expose the contesting interests and theoretical frameworks that determine the re-constructions of the historical Jesus and their implications for contemporary communities of faith. It contends, moreover, that Bible, history, and theology are not important only for religious communities. Rather, as master narratives of Western cultures they always are implicated in and collude with the production and maintenance of systems of knowledge that either foster exploitation and oppression or contribute to a praxis and vision of emancipation and liberation.

In short, such a politics of interpretation seeks to analyze the nexus between re-constructions of the historical Jesus and those theoretical, historical, cultural, and political conceptual frameworks that shape Jesus research.<sup>3</sup> Hence biblical scholarship, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> must understand itself as a critical rhetorical practice. It must carefully explore and assess its own impregnation with hegemonic knowledges and discursive frameworks that make “sense” of the world and produce what counts as “reality” or as “common sense.”

Although Koester would probably not understand his overall work in terms of such a “politics of interpretation,” one of his more recent articles in *Harvard Theological Review* traces the politics shaping the development of what he calls “Panchristianity,” indicating that he may appreciate such a critical-political hermeneutical approach.<sup>5</sup> While there may be hermeneu-

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 230.

<sup>3</sup>Fred W. Burnett and Gary A. Phillips (“Palm Re(a)ding and the Big Bang: Origins and Development of Jesus Traditions,” *RelSRev* 18 [1992] 299), in their review of Koester’s *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), observe that this magisterial work does not refer to *Trajectories*. Hence, they ask: “Koester leaves the impression that his own reading is not colored by theological interests, but what other interests do operate here unacknowledged (Is it the Bultmannian ‘dass?’)”

<sup>4</sup>See my book *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1994).

<sup>5</sup>Helmut Koester, “Writings and the Spirit: Authority and Politics in Ancient Christianity,” *HTR* 84 (1991) 353–72.

tical differences between us, I venture to say that they are not so much in approach as in accentuation. Hence, I hope to show how these differences enhance our common concerns.

The politics of meaning requires that any presentation of Jesus, scientific or otherwise, must own that it is a "re-construction"<sup>6</sup>—and for various reasons I still prefer the category of re-construction over the Derridean category of rewriting—and must open up its historical models or patterns to public reflection and critical scrutiny. Such re-constructive models are valuable not only for how much they can account for the present textual and archaeological information on the Jesus of history and his sociopolitical contexts, but also for whether they are able to inquire into the rhetorical interests and theological functions of historical knowledge productions.

In this essay I review critically examples of two dominant hermeneutical approaches in Jesus research,<sup>7</sup> the historical and the canonical one, along with their sociopolitical locations and implications for Christian self-understanding. Since it seems that historical Jesus research is stuck presently with an either/or choice between historical and theological positivism, I will sketch out crucial elements of an alternative re-constructive paradigm that understands history not so much in terms of "scientific proof" but in terms of memory. Throughout I will use feminist research including my

<sup>6</sup>A lively discussion ensued after my presentation of this paper at the symposium in Professor Koester's honor as to the adequacy of the notion of re-construction. Helmut Koester objected that in archeological work the term communicates more the sense of restoration than that of construction. The following suggestions were made to replace the term: refigure, refashion, rewrite, recuperate, revision, rebuild, and remodel. However, I am not convinced that any of these suggestions expresses more adequately the intended meaning of what I mean by re-construction.

<sup>7</sup>For some of the discussions of Jesus research see William M. Thompson, *The Jesus Debate: A Survey & Synthesis* (New York: Paulist, 1985); Marcus J. Borg, "Portraits of Jesus in Contemporary American Scholarship," *HTR* 84 (1991) 1–22; E. P. Sanders, "Jesus: His Religious 'Type,'" *Reflections* 87 (1992) 4–12; idem, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, 1993); Daniel Korsch, "Neue Jesusliteratur," *BK* 48 (1993) 40–44; Ferdinand Hahn, "Umstrittenes Jesusbild?" *MThZ* 44 (1993) 95–107; John T. Pawlikowski, "Reflections on the Brown-Crossan Debate," *Explorations* 10/1 (1996) 2–3; Seán Freyne, "The Historical Jesus and Archeology," *Explorations* 10/2 (1996) 6; Geza Vermes, "Jesus, the Jew and His Religion," *Explorations* 10/2 (1996) 7–8; Horst Robert Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (WMANT 25; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967); Roy A. Eckhardt, *Reclaiming the Jesus of History: Christology Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Responses to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989); John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1991); and M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).



own as a telltale sign for evaluating the politics of interpretation at work in historical Jesus discourses.

## ■ The Politics of Liberal Jesus Research

In his article "The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism," Dieter Georgi has delineated a trajectory of bourgeois historical Jesus theology operating throughout Christian history beginning with the early Christian notions of the "divine man"<sup>8</sup> and continuing through the New Quest for the historical Jesus.<sup>9</sup> According to Georgi, this trajectory understands Jesus as the great exceptional individual, genius, and hero. "This view that Jesus had been a genius of some sort became the dominant understanding in the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, not only in Germany but also in Western Europe and North America, among both Protestants and Catholics."<sup>10</sup> It continued in a slightly different form in the New Quest for the historical Jesus, which stressed his place as an active subject of history and focused on his individual consciousness, intentions, and decisions.

Georgi concludes that on the whole the New Quest, like the old one,

[has its social] location within the evolution of bourgeois consciousness, not just as an ideal but as an expression of a socioeconomic and political momentum. The contemporaneity of the New Quest with the end of the New Deal and the restoration of the bourgeoisie in the United States and Germany after World War II and within the confines of a burgeoning market-oriented Atlantic community is not accidental.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the emphasis of both the Old and the New Quest on the exemplary or unique historical figure of Jesus and his radical ethics used a negative portrayal of Judaism as its foil. Since Jesus is said to have been conscious that his preaching radically undermined the fundamental beliefs of Judaism, he is understood as having gone to Jerusalem in the full awareness that he risked death. In this interpretation, Jesus' conflict with the Roman authorities is the result of his basic conflict with ritualistic or legalistic Israelite religion.

In addition, postcolonial critics have pointed out that the "quest for the historical Jesus" has been a European affair and has taken place at a time when colonialism was at its peak. Hence, it does not come as a surprise

<sup>8</sup>See also Helmut Koester, "The Divine Human Being," *HTR* 78 (1985) 243–52.

<sup>9</sup>Dieter Georgi, "The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism," *HTR* 85 (1992) 51–83.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

that the "Third Quest" continues the reifying politics of meaning and historical positivism of the first two.<sup>12</sup> One of the most successful and sophisticated scholars of the Third Quest is John Dominic Crossan.<sup>13</sup> Yet at a conference at DePaul University entitled "Jesus and Faith: Theologians in Conversation with the Work of John Dominic Crossan,"<sup>14</sup> Catherine Keller pointed out that when compared with the feminist work of Rita Nakashima Brock,<sup>15</sup> Crossan's portrayal of the historical Jesus still remains caught up in the liberal framework of the old quests, envisioning Jesus as an extraordinary and heroic individual, despite Crossan's expressed interest to the contrary:

[The] events upon which Crossan focuses our attention seem to flow unilaterally from Jesus' own extraordinary, if not ontologically unique, set of talents and projects. He is the one who models and generates "mutuality" whereas according to Nakashima Brock "Jesus *learns from* and is *empowered by*" the women who risk relationship with him. . . . Hence she is able to "redeem" christology, wide rather than high or low, by relocating the christic reality in the relationships themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Keller observes that Crossan's work intersects with my own, "especially concerning the criteria of inclusive, communal and commensal mutuality" understood as radical equality. Yet according to her, one can find in Crossan's *The Historical Jesus* no engagement and "virtually no dialogue with feminist sources," even though the "text overflows with quotations."<sup>17</sup> I mention this because such a neglect of feminist work is not the exception but the rule in much of malestream biblical scholarship.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup>For a review and discussion of this "newest quest" see Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994); James H. Charlesworth, "Annotated Bibliography," in idem, ed., *Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus Within Early Judaism* (New York: Crossroad/The American Interfaith Institute, 1991); John F. O'Grady, "The Present State of Christology," *Critical Studies* 32/1 (April, 1993) 77–91; Werner G. Kümmel, "Jesusforschung seit 1981," *ThR* 53 (1988) 229–49 and 54 (1989) 1–53.

<sup>13</sup>See John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

<sup>14</sup>The proceedings were published in Jeffrey Carlson and Robert A. Ludwig, eds., *Jesus and Faith: A Conversation on the Work of John Dominic Crossan Author of The Historical Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994).

<sup>15</sup>Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1988).

<sup>16</sup>Catherine Keller, "The Jesus of History and the Feminism of Theology," in Carlson and Ludwig, *Jesus and Faith*, 77 (Keller's emphasis).

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>18</sup>To my knowledge, this word was coined by the sociologist Dorothy Smith. I do not use "malestream" in the sense of male-authored but in order to indicate that mainstream scholarship is still determined by elite white men.

In his response to Keller, Crossan confirms her contention. He concurs that in his work "there is virtually no dialogue with feminist sources," yet he insists that this is not a neglect of feminist work but the result of his particular interests. His main concern is "programmatically to initiate a Third Quest for the Historical Jesus by ignoring the Second ("new") quest as an almost total failure."<sup>19</sup> To be fair, in his response, Crossan confesses that he has ignored even Bultmann—an omission he promises to rectify. Crossan's response, however, still does not address the query as to how much he has learned from feminist historical and theological scholarship. Instead he goes on to ask a string of rhetorical questions:

But there is a special problem with "feminist sources" on the historical Jesus. Where are they? Why are so few women interested in that area of research. . . ? Why are so few Christian feminists focusing on the historical Jesus or on questions of inventory, stratigraphy, and attestation, on, that is, the precise cartography of Christianity's *earliest* repression of women?<sup>20</sup>

These rhetorical questions constitute a sweeping gesture to declare all feminist work on the Jesus of history nonexistent because it has not adopted Crossan's method and reconstructive framework. Since Crossan continues to operate out of the liberal androcentric framework of historical Jesus research, he is not able to explore the differences and affinities between his own historical re-constructions and feminist ones. The persisting liberal understanding of Jesus as the exceptional man makes it difficult for him to enter into any serious conversation with feminist work. If he had done so, he would have realized that feminist scholars have made a major contribution to the field by identifying the persistence of anti-Jewish bias in Jesus research and by problematizing the liberal quest's re-inscription of it in the process of elaborating on Jesus as the exceptional man and unique person.

## ■ The Politics of Neo-orthodox Jesus Research

The most publicized challenge to the so-called Third Quest has come from Luke Timothy Johnson, who may serve as the representative of the second major approach in Jesus research. His work, I believe, seeks to replace historical positivism with theological fideist positivism. As the title of his book, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of The Traditional Gospels*<sup>21</sup> announces, Johnson sets out to

<sup>19</sup>John Dominic Crossan, "Responses and Reflections," in Carlson and Ludwig, *Jesus and Faith*, 151.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>21</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996).

challenge the presuppositions governing historical Jesus research and to argue that the “real” Jesus is the Jesus of the canonical gospels and the Christian creed.

Although Johnson comes from a more conservative theological perspective, he seems to agree with Georgi’s negative assessment of the modern scholarly quest for the historical Jesus, albeit on different grounds. His polemics are concerned not so much with the bourgeois character of historical Jesus scholarship, but with its methods and practices as they have emerged in the early 1980s. Johnson focuses in particular on the practices of the well-publicized “Jesus Seminar” under the leadership of Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan, which has resorted to polling practices deriving from consumer research and political campaigns in order to distill the authentic sayings of the “historical Jesus” from the canonical and noncanonical Gospel texts.<sup>22</sup>

Johnson does not point out, however, that this “newest Quest” for the Jesus of history exploded during the resurgence of the political right and the revival of religious fundamentalism. Not just the “Jesus Seminar” but also its counterpart, the American Interfaith Institute, under the leadership of James Charlesworth,<sup>23</sup> has contributed to the restoration of historical positivism, which tends to go hand in hand with political conservatism. Its emphasis on the *realia* of history serves to promote a kind of scientific fundamentalism, since it fails to acknowledge that historians select and interpret archaeological artifacts and textual evidence as well as incorporate them into a scientific model and narrative framework of meaning.

Johnson recognizes this when he repeatedly points out that the re-constructive attempts of modern Jesus research (in particular that of Borg, Crossan, and Mack—whose politics of meaning is more progressive) seek to replace the theological frameworks of the Gospels with modern frames of meaning and models of historical re-construction. He maintains, therefore, that historical Jesus research has only a very limited function in the formation of Christian identity and community, because it can achieve at most only probable but not definitive knowledge. Instead of utilizing a reductionistic method for isolating the figure of the historical Jesus from his narrative context as the “Jesus Seminar” does, he argues that biblical scholars should engage the accounts of the canonical Gospels, which together with other canonical writings, have a high degree of historical probability.

<sup>22</sup>For a defense of the Jesus Seminar see Robert W. Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996).

<sup>23</sup>See my discussion of the institute’s practices in *Jesus: Miriam’s Child and Sophia’s Prophet* (New York: Continuum, 1994) 67–70.

The “real” Jesus is not the re-constructed figure of critical scholarship, Johnson insists, but the resurrected Lord who confronts persons in the pages of the Christian Testament. The four gospels, together with Paul’s letters and other Christian Testament writings, yield some historical information, but this is neither their purpose nor their power. Rather, they display his mode of existence as a pattern of meaning that can find expression in new narratives and in the lives of others. This pattern is one of “obedience and service”:

It expresses the meaning of Jesus’ ministry in terms of its ending: Jesus is the suffering servant whose death is a radical act of obedience toward God and an expression of loving care for his followers.<sup>24</sup>

It is obvious that the articulation of this “pattern” derives as much from the modern neo-orthodox stress on radical obedience as from the reading of Christian Testament writings. While Johnson criticizes other scholars for substituting a modern frame of meaning for that of the canonical Gospels, he himself cannot help doing the same. He constructs such a pattern by reducing the narrative elaborations and contradictions of the Gospels to an essentialist pattern formulated on neo-orthodox grounds.

While denying the normativity of historical reconstructions, Johnson does not mean to abandon the critical function of biblical scholarship altogether because, as he writes,

The texts of the NT are open to criticism on other than historical fronts. They can be challenged morally, religiously, and theologically for their adequacy, consistency, and cogency.<sup>25</sup>

Presumably, then, texts supporting a society that oppresses women should receive criticism on ethical and theological grounds, not on the basis of an alternative and merely probable historical reconstruction.

While I agree with Johnson’s point that critical scholarship must engage in ideological, ethical, and theological criticism, I would not advocate abandoning historical criticism as constitutive for Christian self-understanding. I would not do so because understandings of the past always shape contemporary theology, ethics, and culture. One must not, moreover, forget that Johnson’s essentialist normative pattern of meaning is equally an historical re-constructive formulation that is not simply identical with the canon. The method of extracting an underlying pattern or deep structure from four very different literary accounts follows a “logic of identity” that abolishes difference. Although Johnson tries to distance himself from the method of

<sup>24</sup>Johnson, *Real Jesus*, 165–66.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

Tatian's *Diatessaron* or Augustine's work on the Gospels, he nevertheless does not fully escape this drive to uniformity.

The neoconservative interests of Johnson's work and frame of meaning come to the fore not only in his rejection of the noncanonical Gospels as equally valid sources but also in statements such as the following that permeate the rhetoric of the book:

Most of all we need to understand the primary task of theology not to be the reformer of the world's social structures, nor the ideological critique of the church as institution, nor the discovery of what is false or distorting in religious behavior, but the discernment and articulation of the work of the living God.<sup>26</sup>

While one cannot quibble with such a statement, on further reflection, one needs to point out that to speak about God<sup>27</sup> as living and life-giving, theology cannot but engage in social, ideological, ecclesiastical, and religious critique.

To sum up my argument: Present Jesus research appears to flounder either on the Scylla of liberal bourgeois Jesus research or the Charybdis of canonical orthodox Jesus theology. The recent proliferation of books on Jesus written for popular consumption seems to me to function as the reverse side of the fundamentalist/literalist coin. Fundamentalist or neo-orthodox doctrinal readings seek to "fix" the pluriform expressions of Christian scriptures and traditions, variegated texts and ambiguous metaphors of Jesus in order either to consolidate them into a discourse of definite, one-to-one correspondence or to reduce them to an essentialist pattern of meaning.

In response to such orthodox readings, liberal theological scholarship, for its part, insists on its scientific character, objectivity, and detachment from all theological interests. Yet books about the historical Jesus tend to reassert historical positivism in order to shore up orthodox doctrinal authority. The flood of "new" scholarly and popular books on Jesus thus does nothing to undermine fundamentalist desires for a reliable account of the historical Jesus or religious certainty about the meaning of his life. It tends

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 170.

<sup>27</sup>Feminist theory and theology has generated serious discussions of language and its function. In order to mark the inadequacy and ambiguity of our language about G\*d theologically and to destabilize visibly our way of thinking and speaking about G\*d, I have adopted in my own work—to the consternation of the copy editors—the sign G\*d, which seeks to interrupt our conventional readings of it. This mode of spelling alludes to but is quite different from the Jewish orthodox way of rendering the name of G-d. How much feminist theological work is liable to be shaped and controlled by malestream conventions comes to the fore in *HTR* style policy, which, according to the editor, precludes such spelling. Consequently, my rendering of G\*d was edited out. However, such a "stylistic" emendation has far-reaching theoretical and theological implications.

instead to reinscribe such certainties in terms of historical or theological positivism. Albert Schweitzer was apparently correct after all: scholars inescapably fashion the image of Jesus in their own image and likeness.<sup>28</sup> At best, one can glimpse the historical shadow of Jesus, but how “his picture” develops will always depend on the lens one uses, that is, on the re-constructive model adopted.

This does not mean that critical feminist scholars should abandon the task of history-making. Rather it means that any presentation of Jesus—scientific or otherwise—must acknowledge that it is a “re-construction” and open up its historical models or patterns to public reflection and critical inquiry. Even a truncated account of the politics of interpretation that determines historical Jesus research, such as I have attempted to give here, indicates that critical inquiry into the politics of Jesus research would have to pay special attention to four areas. First, it would need to ask whether such research reinscribes in modern terms the anti-Jewish bias of some of the Gospel accounts. Secondly, it must pay attention to how much this sort of re-construction can undo the marginalization and erasure of wo/men<sup>29</sup> from historical records and consciousness. Third, since Jesus research has served the interests of Western colonization and hegemony it must be able to problematize the theologies or ideologies of those interpretations that foster the imperialism of colonization and domination inscribed in biblical texts and in critical scholarship on Jesus. Finally, in a situation of the ever-increasing globalization of communication and the impoverishment of peoples, an ethics of interpretation must evaluate such re-constructive models for how much they promote the politics of exclusivity, inferiority, prejudice, and dehumanization in cultural or religious identity formation.

## ■ Memory as a Paradigm of Historical Jesus Re-construction

From a critical feminist liberationist perspective neither the liberal quest for the historical Jesus nor the neo-orthodox advocacy of canonical essentialism provides a satisfactory framework for interpretation. I have argued, therefore, that a feminist historical and theological re-construction of Jesus

<sup>28</sup>Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (1906; reprinted New York: MacMillan, 1961).

<sup>29</sup>As always I use this term here to include also men. For the problematic use of the term woman/women see Denise Riley, “Am I That Name”: *Feminism and the Category of Women in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). My way of spelling wo/men seeks to underscore not only the incoherent destabilized character of the term “woman/women” but also to retain the expression “women” as a political category. Hence, whenever I speak of wo/men I mean to include not only all women but also to speak of oppressed and marginalized men. The expression wo/men must therefore be understood as inclusive rather than as an exclusive universalized gender term.

ought not to adopt the liberal re-constructive framework of Jesus, as heroic individual, a re-construction that isolates him from his people or his followers. Nor should it subscribe to the neo-orthodox apologetic politics of canonical normativity. Instead, a feminist re-construction adopts as its re-constructive model of interpretation both a sociopolitical frame of struggle and a theologically inclusive frame of radical equality and well-being.

This requires a shift in research paradigms. As the title of my book *In Memory of Her*<sup>30</sup> indicates, this is a move away from seeking to produce scientific certainty and theological normativity, to aiming at critical retrieval and articulation of *memory*. Memory, as a reconstructive frame of meaning, does not require one to construe a sharp contrast and dualistic opposition between history and theology, between objectivity and interestedness, between Jesus and Jewishness, between the exceptional individual and the one who was shaped by his community, between the pre-Easter and the post-Easter Jesus, between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. If the memory of Jesus' suffering and resurrection, understood as an instance of unjust human suffering and survival, is at the heart and center of Christian memory, then the critical line lies between injustice and justice, between the world of domination and a world of freedom and well-being.

In his most recent response to John Kloppenborg's review article on Q and historical Jesus research,<sup>31</sup> Helmut Koester also has taken up the category of memory in a positive vein.

How did Jesus' followers preserve the memory of this proclamation? It is useful to return to the insights of Johann Gottfried Herder, which have been so deplorably neglected in two centuries of life-of-Jesus scholarship. The most immediate memory of history, Herder claimed, has nothing to do with accurately recording what happened; rather, memory is immediately recast (or "inscribed," or transformed) into hymn, song, story, myth, legend, and celebration.<sup>32</sup>

Yet whereas Koester seeks to explicate his conceptualization of memory with reference to Herder, my own understanding of memory is indebted to the critical theory of the Frankfurt school, as well as to political and liberation theologies. Moreover, whereas his work underscores the "word," that is, the sayings and proclamation of Jesus, I have tended to place prac-

<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (1983; 10th Anniversary Edition, New York: Crossroad, 1994).

<sup>31</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest for the Historical Jesus," *HTR* 89 (1996) 307–44; Helmut Koester, "Response to John S. Kloppenborg," *HTR* 89 (1996) 345–49.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.



tices, systemic structures, and wo/men in the center of historical re-construction. Such differences in focus must be negotiated, therefore, on the level of re-constructive model rather than adjudicated in terms of "truth" or "data," because the meaning of sources and data depends in part on whether one's re-constructive model is inspired by bourgeois liberalism rather than canonical essentialism, by Benjamin rather than Herder.<sup>33</sup>

Such a change of theoretical framework, or hermeneutical "binoculars," makes it possible to understand the way that the agency and leadership of Jewish, Greco-Roman, Asian, African, free and enslaved, rich and poor, elite and marginal wo/men shaped Jesus and early Christian beginnings. Those who hold the opposite view that, for instance, slave wo/men were not active shapers of early Christian life would have to argue their point. If one shifts from the frame of reference that centers on Jesus as exceptional human being or as "God striding over the earth" to that of memory in the discipleship of equals, one can no longer hold that wo/men did not influence the Jesus traditions and movements. Rather than taking rhetorical texts and sources at face value, one must unravel their politics of meaning.<sup>34</sup>

The objection that this is a circular argument applies to all hermeneutical practices. For instance, social scientific studies that presuppose the preconstructed, dualistic opposition of "honor and shame" as givens in Mediterranean cultures will read early Christian texts about "Jesus and women" within this assumed, theoretically constructed frame of reference.<sup>35</sup> These scholarly narratives, however, appear to be more "realistic" and "objective" than feminist ones because hegemonic kyriocentric discourses function as ideologies; that is, they mystify the "constructedness" of their account of reality. Historical positivist narratives of "who Jesus really was" or "what the world of early Christianity really looked like" easily come to be seen as common sense, objectively "scientific" accounts, even though they are as much a construction as are feminist versions.

In addition, a rhetorical re-constructive model of emancipatory struggles does not contrast the Jesus of history and the movement that has kept alive

<sup>33</sup>See also Marsha Hewitt, "The Redemptive Power of Memory," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 10 (1994) 73–90.

<sup>34</sup>See my articles "Text and Reality—Reality as Text: The Problem of a Feminist Historical and Social Reconstruction Based on Texts," *StTh* 40 (1989) 19–34; and "The Rhetoricity of Historical Knowledge: Pauline Discourse and Its Contextualizations," in Lukas Bormann, Kelly Tredici, Angela Standhartinger, eds., *Religious Propaganda & Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 445–70.

<sup>35</sup>See Mary Ann Tolbert, "Social, Sociological, and Anthropological Methods," in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed., *Searching the Scriptures* (2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993) 1. 255–72.

his memory with contemporary Jewish belief and cult,<sup>36</sup> but with kyriarchal structures of domination in antiquity. It is able to situate the beginnings of the Galilean prophetic-Wisdom-*basileia* movement<sup>37</sup> named after Jesus within a broader historical frame of reference that allows one to trace the tensions and struggles between emancipatory understandings and movements inspired by the democratic logic of equality, on the one hand, and the dominant kyriarchal structures of society and religion in antiquity, on the other. Ancient movements of emancipatory struggles against kyriarchal relations of exploitation do not begin with the Jesus movements. They have, on the contrary, a long history in Greek, Roman, Asian, and Jewish cultures.<sup>38</sup>

It is important, however, to recognize that such a rhetorical re-constructive model (which does not subscribe to historical or theological positivism) requires a different understanding of method.<sup>39</sup> Underlying such a model are the following theoretical assumptions:

First, a rhetorical-political model of historical re-construction understands its methodological approach to be different from that of either liberal or neo-orthodox Jesus research. In this model language and text are neither a window on the world nor simply reflective of reality. Hence, it does not take sources—be they textual or material—simply as data, but understands them as rhetorical practices and interpretations. Such an approach insists, moreover, that texts and sources as well as historical reconstructions and scholarship are perspectival. What one sees depends on where one stands. Historical objectivity can be approximated only in and through a careful rhetorical analysis. In addition, the rhetorical political model insists that historical reconstruction must carefully spell out the criteria with which it adjudicates different texts, sources, and interpretations. Finally, it maintains that historical re-construction can claim only probability but not normativity. Historiography must reason out, in the light of alternative scholarly discourses, why its own re-constructive proposal is more adequate to its sources and more plausible. Historical Jesus research, therefore, gains normativity

<sup>36</sup>See Bernd Wander, *Trennungsprozesse zwischen frühem Christentum und Judentum* (Heidelberg: Francke, 1994); for the feminist discussion on anti-Judaism see now Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker, *Von der Wurzel getragen: Christlich-feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung mit dem Antijudaismus*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

<sup>37</sup>Helmut Koester ("Jesus the Victim," *JBL* 111 [1992] 6 n. 14) objects to the term "movement" because the National Socialists and Hitler used it. In the American context, however, the term reminds one of socialpolitical progressive movements such as the abolitionist, suffrage, workers, civil rights, wo/men's, and indigenous peoples movements.

<sup>38</sup>See Orlando Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

<sup>39</sup>M. Eugene Boring, "The Historical-Critical Method's Criteria of Authenticity," *Semeia* 44 (1988) 9–24.

not merely on historical but also on theological grounds. If as Christians believe, God has become present and visible in Jesus of Nazareth; if his human life and death are a manifestation of the divine, then it is important to re-construct the Jesus of history not merely in order to know who Jesus was but in order to adjudicate what kind of God has been revealed in Jesus.

Second, such a critical-rhetorical model must identify the points of scholarly agreement regarding crucial historical information in order to use them as touchstones for the plausibility of its own work. Four *topoi* are central to my own critical re-constructive proposal.<sup>40</sup>

1. Early Christian writings, non-Christian contemporary references, and modern scholarship all agree that Jesus was a Galilean Jew. Hence, one must see him not in contrast to, but as a part of the variegated Jewish piety of his time. The "criterion of dissimilarity" should give way to one of contextuality. The question becomes, not whether Jesus was Jewish but to what kind of Judaism did Jesus belong?

2. Yet, what is then distinctive about Jesus that would allow historians to distinguish him from his contemporaries? I would argue that Jesus is historically distinct from his followers and from most of his Jewish compatriots because of his execution. In that aspect he is unusual but not unique among first-century reformers. The historical event of the execution of Jesus caused a fundamental rhetorical problem that called for interpretation. Accordingly, one must interrogate the available source materials to see whether they try to make sense out of this historical "fact" or whether they espouse a pre-crucifixion perspective.<sup>41</sup> Texts that displace this conflict with Rome onto fellow Jews must have been articulated after Jesus' violent death. Such a criterion of conflict modifies the criterion of multiple attestation.

3. Scholars generally agree that Jesus preached the *basileia* of God, that is, the commonweal of God. This proclamation was sociopolitical rather than individualistic-spiritual. It is now very difficult to appreciate the political impact of this central proclamation, although Jesus' hearers could not but think of the Roman empire when they heard the phrase. The *basileia* was a tensive religious symbol drawing life from the tension between the kingdom's already incipient reality in the miracles and inclusive discipleship community and in its alternative utopian vision. The Greek term

<sup>40</sup>Whether these touchstones that modify the "criteria of authenticity" are accepted depends on the politics of interpretation that governs historical Jesus research.

<sup>41</sup>In my view the deuteronomistic prophetic interpretation of Jesus' death in Q is such an instance of "making sense" after the event. It seems to me problematic to separate this interpretation too rigidly from the "wisdom story of the persecution and vindication of the righteous one" which forms the pattern of the passion narratives. For such an attempt see John S. Kloppenborg, "'Easter Faith' and the Sayings Gospel Q," *Semeia* 49 (1990) 71–100.

*basileia* ("kingdom") was also a political symbol that appealed to the oppositional imagination of people victimized by the imperial system.<sup>42</sup> Texts and sources must therefore be read and adjudicated in terms of this religious-political vision of God's alternative world.

4. Scholars generally agree that Jesus, like other Jewish prophets, gathered around him the poor and despised, the ill and possessed, the outcasts and prostitutes, the taxcollectors and sinners—that is, the marginal in his society. Hence, the criterion of dissimilarity should be replaced with that of inclusivity and equality. Such inclusivity and equality must be shown as being within the register of Jewish theology at the time.

How difficult it is to establish a model and politics of interpretation different from that of historical or theological positivism becomes clear in the misunderstandings of such a proposal. For instance, my work has been misconstrued as succumbing to the normative search for "pristine Christian origins" or as subscribing to the "Golden Age/rapid decline" model of historical re-construction. Others have objected to this proposal by arguing that historical re-construction, conceptualized in terms of memory, functions as a "myth," that is, a story of pristine beginnings for contemporary Christian feminists. Such an objection, however, overlooks not only the different power relations that determine hegemonic and feminist proposals. It also ignores the fact that the expressed interest of this style of re-construction is neither neo-orthodox canonical, apologetic interpretation, nor the liberal quest for Jesus, the "great heroic" individual.

If history always serves to foster cultural or religious identity formations, then any historical re-construction participates in "myth-making and identity formation." In an article on "History and Rhetoric," Paul Ricœur has underscored this aspect of historical understanding. He argues that historical interpretation is a "historical activity," which has a "complex relation to the people of the past who themselves 'made history.'" History according to Ricœur is a mode of knowledge "in which the subject and object belong together"<sup>43</sup> in a temporal and practical field. Historical inter-

<sup>42</sup>For such an emphasis see also Helmut Koester ("Jesus the Victim," 14–15) although his polemical emphasis on eschatology seems to depoliticize the *basileia* proclamation. See his note 15 where he seems to reduce my overall proposal to one key element, the understanding of Jesus as prophet and messenger of Sophia.

<sup>43</sup>Paul Ricœur, "History and Rhetoric," *Diogenes* 168 (1994) 22. One overlooks this fact if one constructs a dichotomy between those who construe "a Jesus who is just like one of us" and a Jesus "who does not fit our categories." Any historical knowledge is attained in and through our socially conditioned categories and lenses. For example, "eschatology" is a modern concept. The question is not whether but which categories one privileges. See also "Eschatology of the New Testament," *IDBSup*, 271–77.

pretation and historiography are possible not only because of a single “tempo-spatial framework” but also:

[because of] a single field of praxis, evidenced by the historians dependence on the “making of real historical actors” for his own “history making.” Before presenting themselves as master craftsmen of stories made out of the past, historians must first stand as heirs of the past. . . . Before even forming the idea of re-presenting the past, we are in debt to the men and women of the past who contributed to making us what we are. Before we can represent the past we must live as beings affected by the past.<sup>44</sup>

To my mind, the question is not whether critical feminists or cultural critics should participate in such rhetorical “history-making” but rather how they should do it and to what ends. Awareness of the politics of interpretation must not lead either to a reassertion of historical and theological positivism or to theological dogmatism.

## ■ Conclusion

I have argued here that historical Jesus research is a critical practice and process that must continually attempt to re-envision on historical-critical grounds our knowledge about Jesus and the discipleship community that carries his name. It must do so in order to be able on theological grounds to judge critically Christian identity formations and their rhetorical and theological legitimizations. Helmut Koester’s work, with its hermeneutical interest in theological inclusivity, pluriformity, and ecclesiality, is helpful for an emancipatory historico-theological re-visioning of Jesus and early Christian beginnings, one that critically indicts sociopolitical, cultural, and religious structures of alienation and domination.

<sup>44</sup>Paul Ricœur, “History and Rhetoric,” 23.

# τὰ δρώμενα καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα: The Eucharistic Memory of Jesus' Words in First Corinthians

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One manner in which to investigate the life of Jesus' sayings in the early church is to ask how communities preserved and transmitted their memory. I ask here, however, a somewhat different question, namely, what did Christians accomplish by remembering certain words and actions specifically as those of Jesus. In particular, I inquire in this article into the consequences of remembering Jesus' words and actions as authoritative within the cultic context of the Corinthian community. What is the memory of Jesus that informs chapters 10 and 11 of 1 Corinthians? What light, moreover, might an answer to this question shed upon the formation of a narrative about Jesus? To this end, I present a reading of materials in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 that attends to cult, both its ritual and its narrative, and to the function of authoritative speech in cultic context.

I undertake this study as part of a larger investigation that tests the hypothesis that the memory of Jesus' sufferings and death, the passion narrative, developed in relation to the cultic practice of various early Christian communities. Because this hypothesis has taken shape in conversation with Helmut Koester over the past few years, conversations not least about the contributions that the history of religions school at the turn of this century made to the development of form criticism through the writings of Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann, it is my pleasure to offer this piece to Helmut Koester as a birthday tribute.

## ■ The Sinai Covenant in 1 Corinthians 10

It is widely recognized that in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 Paul addresses issues of concern to the Corinthian community and himself with regard to their eating practices, namely, the question whether to eat food previously offered in pagan worship and Paul's perception that the cultic meal of the community is reflecting the divisions within the community rather than expressing its unity.<sup>1</sup> If one looks at these issues from the perspective of the proper performance of cult, rather than simply from that of individual ethical behavior, it is possible to characterize what is at stake here as a contrast between a cultic meal properly performed and one gone awry.

It is important to be clear that by the phrase "the proper performance of cult" I do not mean solely a concern with whether the community uses the right words or performs the right actions in the execution of the ritual meal. This phrase refers rather to a reenactment that works, one in which the community can say of the cult legend as it is expressed in ritual, "This is about us." The ritual is thus also a reenactment of which every performance constitutes the community anew. At the heart of this theoretical understanding of reenactment and the proper performance of cult lies the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis*, οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, "this is that."<sup>2</sup> We should be clear, moreover, that the assessment of whether a performance of cult "works" comes from within that cultic tradition. In this reading of 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, then, one finds the perspective about the proper performance of cult that Paul inscribes in the text as his own and also attributes to his audience.

The foundational legend of the cult of Israel is the story of the Exodus, the making of the covenant at Sinai, the time in the wilderness, and the entry into the land of promise.<sup>3</sup> That this cult legend already had a long history of reenactment is evident, for example, from its forms in various liturgical texts associated with covenant renewal from Deutero-Isaiah, Judith, and various psalms. Texts such as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Hebrews, and some of the baptismal hymns in 1 Peter demonstrate the ways in which this cult legend and the practice of covenant renewal were foundational for a

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Hans Conzelmann, *First Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (ed. George W. MacRae; trans. James W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 170, 193, 202; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1991) 151–57.

<sup>2</sup>Aristotle Poet. 1448b.17; Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) 42–44.

<sup>3</sup>It is important not to restrict this cult legend to the story of the Exodus from Egypt per se or to think of the observance of Passover as the sole cultic action that is connected with this narrative. Such a narrowness of understanding is one of the difficulties with the approach of Joachim Jeremias in *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1966). Jeremias argued (41–84) that the accounts of the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels and in 1 Corinthians are best understood as describing a Passover meal and thus that Jesus' death was interpreted in terms of the Passover sacrifice. Rather, the

number of early Christian communities in their experiments in cultic and social identity and in articulating the memory of Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

This cult legend, specifically Israel's journey through the sea and its sojourn in the wilderness, clearly underlies 1 Cor 10:1–13. Wayne Meeks has argued that this passage is a “midrashic homily,” composed independently of the rest of the epistle by Paul or someone else, and serving parenetic purposes in the epistle.<sup>5</sup> Although he adopted the characterization “homily,” Meeks did not discuss the form itself. Lawrence Wills, however, has recognized a pattern of exempla, conclusion, and exhortation within this passage that corresponds to the form of the “word of exhortation” or sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Putting aside the question of whether the passage reflects Paul's exegesis of scripture or that of the Corinthian congregation,<sup>7</sup> one may observe that the argument that it is a homily locates the passage within the ritual practice of the community as an articulation of the cult legend. Here the foundational narrative of Israel is actualized, as I shall show, with specific reference to the cultic meal.

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cult legend in its fullness comprises all the events from the departure from Egypt to the entry into the promised land, particular moments of which may be the focus of reenactment in cultic observance and in the self-understanding of the community.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, “Morphology of the Passion Narrative” (Th.D. diss., Harvard Divinity School, 1997).

<sup>5</sup>Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 99. Meeks presents a detailed development of this observation in idem, “‘And Rose up to Play’: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22,” *JSNT* 16 (1982) 64–78. Meeks adopts the terminology of “midrash” for this passage from Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK 5; 9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) 250.

<sup>6</sup>Lawrence Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity,” *HTR* 77 (1984) 288–89, 299.

<sup>7</sup>Although Meeks asserts that 1 Cor 10:1–13 was composed prior to its use in the epistle, he is equivocal as to whether Paul himself composed it or used an existing source. Conzelmann (*First Corinthians*, 165) describes 1 Cor 10:1–11 as “a self-contained, scribal discourse on passages from the biblical exodus narrative”; his comments on this passage appear to presume that the author is Paul. Richard Jeske (“The Rock was Christ: The Ecclesiology of 1 Corinthians 10,” in Dieter Lührmann and Georg Strecker, eds., *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag* [Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1980] 251) argues that in 1 Cor 10:1–17 it is possible to perceive an exegesis of the Exodus as the Corinthian community understood it. He thereby isolates vv. 1–4, 6a, 11, 13, and 16–17 as a *Vorlage* that Paul adapted by interjecting comments. In the Corinthians' ecclesiology, according to Jeske, they were the “eschatological community. . . which was free from the dangers that beset it” (p. 249), whose salvation was secure, and who could thus embrace a lifestyle characterized by “conscious engagement with the demons of the ages.” Mitchell (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 138 n. 438), while agreeing with Jeske that the focus of the passage is ecclesiology, attributes the authorship to Paul, who “introduced the scriptural references himself. . . to respond to Corinthian factionalism.” Most recently, Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [2 vols.; EKKNT 7; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995] 2. 383–84) has acknowledged that there may be a *Vorlage* employed here but that Paul has so reworked it that it is not possible to distinguish between the source and the redaction.



Meeks's analysis of the passage indicates its contrasting fivefold structure, that is, the five events in which "all our ancestors" (signaled by the five repetitions of πάντες [1 Cor 10:1–4]) participated are matched by the five negative events in which "some" (τινες) shared (1 Cor 10:7–10). All shared in cloud, sea, baptism into Moses, spiritual food, and spiritual drink, but *some* engaged in desiring evil things, the worship of idols, *porneia* ("sexual immorality"), testing Christ, and murmuring. Verses 6 and 11 designate each group of events as τύποι ("types"),<sup>8</sup> a word that functions as a key indicator of the process of reenactment of scripture in the here and now.<sup>9</sup> This characterization not only reinforces the passage's structure but also makes clear that the point is the actualization of the cult legend in the life of the community.

The passage contains only one explicit quotation of scripture, namely, the quotation of Exod 32:6 in verse 7: ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν ("The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play"). In its context in Exodus this statement refers to the ritual meal following the sacrifices made to the Golden Calf. Meeks argues that the verb παίζειν ("to play") encompasses all the idolatrous and rebellious actions named here in 1 Corinthians and that the entire passage is an extended exegesis of this verse from Exodus 32.<sup>10</sup>

The episode of the Golden Calf relates to a cultic meal gone terribly awry; it is a covenant sacrifice and meal in honor of what is not God. Without contesting the centrality of this episode to 1 Cor 10:1–13, I would suggest that this aberrant cultic meal contrasts with another cultic covenantal meal, reference to which lies submerged in the first section of the passage.

In Exod 32:7, the Septuagint names the offerings to the Golden Calf θυσία σωτηρίου ("a sacrifice of well-being [or salvation]").

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor 10:6, ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν ("And these things occurred as types for us") forms an *inclusio* with 1 Cor 10:11, ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκείνοις, ἐγγράφη δὲ πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν ("And these things happened to them by way of types, and were written for our admonition"). See Meeks, "And Rose up to Play," 65.

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of typology in Michael Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto: The Sura of the Poets and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority," in James L. Kugel, ed., *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition* (Myth and Poetics; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 95–101.

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of understanding how the reenactment of scriptural memory contributes to the formation of the passion narrative, it is worth noting that the semantic range of παίζειν and ἐμπαίζειν includes "to mock, to make fun of" and that ἐμπαίζειν is used for the mocking of Jesus in Mark 15:20, 31. Meeks notes that the use of παίζειν in the quotation would readily suggest the episodes of "testing Christ" and "grumbling" in 1 Cor 10:9–10, but does not explicitly connect this use with the passion narrative.

And he took [the gold] from them and formed it in the mold and made it into a molten calf and said, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron proclaimed, saying, "Tomorrow is a feast of the Lord." Rising early on the next day, Aaron brought up burnt offerings and offered a sacrifice of well-being, and the people sat down to eat and drink and they rose up to play.<sup>11</sup>

This use is the only instance of this technical sacrificial term in a negative context in the scriptures of Israel. Moreover, although the term occurs repeatedly in the ritual instructions for this sacrifice in Numbers and Leviticus,<sup>12</sup> it occurs in only one other episode in Exodus. Exodus 24 narrates the ritual for the making of the covenant at Sinai, and here the offerings for the ratification of the covenant are also named as *θυσία σωτηρίου*.<sup>13</sup> This phrase thus connects the two episodes as contrasting rituals. After the sacrifice in Exodus 24, not only does Moses sprinkle the altar with the blood of the sacrifices and read the book of the covenant to the people, but he also sprinkles the people with the blood, saying, "See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words" (*ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης, ἧς διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων τῶν λόγων τούτων*).<sup>14</sup> Scholars generally acknowledge that this statement has a close connection with the interpretation underlying the eucharistic word of Jesus over the cup in 1 Cor 11:25, owing to the similarity between *τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης* ("the blood of the covenant") and *ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι* ("the new covenant in my blood").<sup>15</sup> This is one link between Exodus 24 and the cultic meal of 1 Corinthians, but it is also necessary to consider the meal that accompanies the making of the covenant in Exodus 24.

After the sprinkling with the blood of the covenant, Moses and the leaders of Israel ascend the mountain, where they eat and drink in the presence of God.

<sup>11</sup>Exod 32:4–7: καὶ ἐδέξατο ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἔπλασεν αὐτὰ ἐν τῇ γραφίδι καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ μόσχον χωνευτὸν καὶ εἶπεν· οὗτοι οἱ θεοί σου, Ἰσραήλ, οἵτινες ἀνεβίβασάν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου. καὶ ἰδὼν Ἀαρὼν ὠκοδόμησεν θυσιαστήριον κατέναντι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκήρυξεν Ἀαρὼν λέγων· ἑορτὴ τοῦ κυρίου αὐρίου. καὶ ὀρθρίσας τῇ ἐπαύριον ἀνεβίβασεν ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ προσήνεγκεν θυσίαν σωτηρίου, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν.

<sup>12</sup>See especially Leviticus 3 and 7:11–18.

<sup>13</sup>Exod 24:5 LXX.

<sup>14</sup>Exod 24:8 LXX.

<sup>15</sup>Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 199; Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock; London: Epworth, 1962) 116–17; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 268–69; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II* (HNT 9; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1949) 57.

And Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the place there where the God of Israel stood. And what was under his feet was like the work of sapphire brick and like the appearance of the firmament of heaven in purity, and not one of those summoned of Israel deserted. And they appeared in the place of God and they ate and they drank.<sup>16</sup>

The leaders then remain where they are on the mountain, while Moses goes up further. It is significant, however, that the cloud comes and covers the whole mountain.

I would argue that it is this episode to which 1 Cor 10:1–4 primarily refers. The widespread interpretation of the phrase “Our ancestors were all under the cloud” is that it refers to the pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites by day as they journeyed.<sup>17</sup> Scholars typically make recourse to the psalm of the Exodus, Ps 104(105):39a: διεπέτασεν νεφέλην εἰς σκέπην αὐτοῖς (“he spread out a cloud upon them for a shelter”) in order to explain the discrepancy between being *under* a cloud and following *behind* a pillar of cloud.<sup>18</sup> Although I do not exclude the resonance of this motif in 1 Corinthians 10, I suggest that Exodus 24 supplies the primary narrative for Paul, especially since Exodus 24 also contains the reference to eating and drinking in the presence of God, which corresponds well with “all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink.” The food and drink are πνευματικά (“spiritual”) because they constitute a covenant meal in the divine presence. It is true that 1 Cor 10:4 explicates the spiritual drink as coming from the moving rock (which was Christ), but this interpretation breaks up the parallel structure of the passage and may be a gloss. Indeed, the manna and miraculous water in the wilderness, as expres-

<sup>16</sup>Exod 24:9–11 LXX: καὶ ἀνέβη Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἀαρων καὶ Ναδάβ καὶ Ἀβιούδ καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα τῆς γερονσίας Ἰσραὴλ καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον, οὗ εἰστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὥσει ἔργον πλίνθου σαπφείρου καὶ ὡς περ εἶδος στερεώματος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῇ καθαριότητι. καὶ τῶν ἐπιλέκτων τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ οὐ διεφώνησεν οὐδὲ εἷς· καὶ ὥφθησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔφαγον καὶ ἔπιον. The differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text are striking. The latter text reads, “Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. He did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank” (Exod 24:9–11 NRSV). As is frequently the case, the Septuagint avoids the directness of seeing God. The phrase, “not one of those summoned of Israel deserted,” in place of “he did not lay his hand on the chief men of Israel” is significant in light of the emphasis in 1 Cor 10:1–4 upon *all* the ancestors. Because of their subsequent desertion and quarreling, 1 Cor 10:6–11 shifts the emphasis (διεφώνησεν may also be translated “disagreed”).

<sup>17</sup>Exod 13:21.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 165.

sions of divine faithfulness to the covenant, apparently have become extensions of the covenant meal on Sinai.

A second reason for connecting Exodus 24 with 1 Corinthians 10 is the problematic phrase “baptized into Moses.” The phrase is formulated by analogy to the baptismal formula, “baptized into Christ,” that appears elsewhere in 1 Corinthians and refers to entrance into the covenant defined by Jesus’ death. Baptism into Moses here denotes entry into the covenant at Sinai and the identification with Moses.<sup>19</sup>

Four of the five items in 1 Cor 10:1–4 readily connect with Exodus 24. That is, they are linked to a portion of the cult legend that is already activated by the eucharistic word over the cup and which contrasts markedly with the idolatrous meal in Exodus 32. At the heart of this homily, then, is a contrast between two cultic meals, one eaten in the presence of the Lord and one in the presence of an idol. This opposition is precisely that which Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 10:19–21, namely, between the table of the Lord and the table of demons. To draw out this distinction, moreover, Paul employs the diction of the Song of Moses from Deuteronomy 32.<sup>20</sup> This song is thus not only a central cultic text about the covenant, but it also plays a prominent role in the formation of a story about Jesus’ passion when that death is understood in covenantal terms.

One might object that the order of items in 1 Cor 10:1–4—cloud, sea, baptism into Moses in cloud and sea, food and drink—precludes using Exodus 24 as the primary frame of reference, since the fact that the cloud comes before the sea twice means that it must refer to the pillar of cloud that precedes the Israelites *before* they cross the sea as well as after. The spiritual food and drink are, according to this view, the manna and the water in the wilderness that all Israelites share. This may be the case, but it would not explain the opposition in 1 Corinthians and Exodus between wilderness meals reflecting faithfulness to the covenant and those associated with idolatry.

In order to see more clearly the contrast with the meals associated with idolatry, one might consider the four other episodes (in addition to the idolatry of the Golden Calf) that the second part of the homily summarizes. First, in 1 Cor 10:6, as Margaret Mitchell has pointed out, “desiring evil things” is a specific reference to the craving for meat in Numbers 11.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Ellen Juhl Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers* (AGJU 27; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 291–93.

<sup>20</sup>Note the allusion to Deut 32:17a: ἔθυσαν δαίμονις καὶ οὐ θεῷ (“They sacrificed to demons and not to God”) in 1 Cor 10:20a: ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαίμονις καὶ οὐ θεῷ (“but that what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God”), as well as the use of παραζηλώω (“provoke to anger”) in 1 Cor 10:22 and Deut 32:21.

<sup>21</sup>Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 138–39 n. 439.

This episode is an etiological legend for the place name Kibroth-hattaavah, or in the Septuagint, μνήματα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας (“graves of desire”). Second, in 1 Cor 10:8 the negative example of *porneia* derives from Numbers 25, where this sexual activity was associated with idolatrous worship of the Baal of Peor and his meals. Third, the testing and destruction by serpents in 1 Cor 10:9 comes from the episode at the waters of Meribah in Numbers 20 and Exodus 17. Indeed, in the latter, testing becomes the key rubric for the episode, expressed even in the place name “Massah,” which the Septuagint translates Πειρασμός. This event is an instance of problematic drinking, which matches the problematic eating elsewhere. In Numbers and Deuteronomy the episodes at Meribah and Massah explain why Moses died prior to the entry into the promised land; concern for the fate of Moses appears likely to have contributed to the construction of narratives about the fate of Jesus. The final negative example in 1 Cor 10:10 is the murmuring (γογγύζω) of the Israelites. Although this is a frequent motif of the wilderness journey, it is especially prominent in Num 14:27–35, where the verb or its cognate noun occurs three times in verse 27 alone, and where it is the reason why none of that generation of Israelites except Joshua and Caleb can enter the promised land. Elsewhere, too, much of the murmuring concerns food and questions God’s faithfulness to the covenant.

In sum, therefore, the sermon’s narrative and exhortation reenacts the foundational legend of the cult of Israel in such a way that the Corinthian community is located in the wilderness, where it must choose between a cultic meal properly performed and one gone awry. This narrative move provides the framework for understanding the cultic practices discussed in 1 Cor 11:17–34.

## ■ Jesus’ Words and Actions in 1 Cor 11:23–26

Turning to the account of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 11:23–26, it is immediately apparent that Paul is quoting a tradition that already has authority in the community.<sup>22</sup> This is marked speech, that is, an event in language set apart from ordinary speech. I would suggest that, as marked speech, the quotation of this tradition functions as an enigmatic but authoritative utterance in this context. Like the riddles in Homer and Hesiod, or the fables of Aesop, the quotation of this tradition implies the existence of a community that has specific qualifications for “getting” what it means. Gregory Nagy’s analysis of such marked speech in earlier Greek literature

<sup>22</sup>See Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 197–98; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 156; Helmut Koester, “The Historical Jesus and the Cult of the Kyrios Christos,” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 24 (1995) 13–18.

has shown that such a community is characterized as ἄγαθοί (having a particular ethic), σοφοί (having the intellectual skills necessary for the decoding of the utterance), and φιλοί (having certain affiliative bonds).<sup>23</sup> Each of these three types of qualifications enables the reenactment of marked speech in the community's life (that is, in its cult), comprising ritual, narrative, and ethic. Although early Christian literature does not always employ this earlier diction for distinguishing the community, these three categories are useful for thinking about how marked speech functions here in 1 Corinthians 11.<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor 10:1–13, I suggest, sets the stage by defining what is at stake in “getting” what this marked utterance is about, namely, the proper performance of the cultic meal.

Of the three categories of qualifications—roughly, the ethical, the affiliative, and the intellectual—the first two are the real concern of much of the material surrounding the eucharistic tradition in 1 Corinthians. For the present, I point simply to the concern about κοινωνία in 1 Cor 10:16–18 and the regard for the weaker members of the community and those without food in 1 Cor 11:17–22 as indications of these categories. The quotation of the eucharistic tradition itself, in my opinion, contains the clues to the proper “intellectual” stance for the cultic reenactment. Specifically, being σοφοί in this case entails awareness of the actualization of the cult legend in the person of Jesus. It is, in other words, a matter of knowing how the story goes in the here and now.

I now examine 1 Cor 11:23–26 as marked, authoritative speech for indications of how it constructs authority and how the cult legend encompasses the memory of Jesus. First, in 1 Cor 11:23 Paul marks the tradition as one that he received “from the Lord” (ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου). Whatever else this phrase may indicate, here it serves to ground the tradition in the au-

<sup>23</sup>Nagy, *Pindar's Homer*, 147. With particular reference to Pindar, Nagy offers (ibid.) the following definitions: the σοφοί are “those who are ‘skilled’ in decoding the message encoded by the poet in his poetry”; the ἄγαθοί are “those who are intrinsically ‘noble’ by virtue of having been raised on proper ethical standards, which are the message encoded in the poetry”; and the φιλοί are “those who are ‘near and dear’ and who are thereby interconnected to the poet and to each other, so that the message that is encoded in the poetry may be transmitted to them and through them.” It is important to note that to a large extent each capability requires the others.

<sup>24</sup>This way of analyzing traditional utterances draws upon the work of Roman Jakobson and other members of the Prague School of Linguistics. See, for example, Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2: *Word and Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971) 136; idem and Krystyna Pomorska, “The Concept of Mark,” in idem, *On Language* (ed. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995) 134–40. The performance of Greek lyric and epic poetry provides a suitable analogy for exploring the formal characteristics of the performance of cult in ritual and narrative in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere in early Christianity.

thority of Jesus. Moreover, the utterance is familiar to the community; it must have influence as part of their cultic treasure horde. In other words, they know already how the story goes; they should be σοφοί.

The marked utterance itself consists of certain actions and words that here “the Lord Jesus” is said to have done. Whatever the historical grounding of this memory, my concern here is with the cultic consequences of attributing these words and actions to “the Lord Jesus.”<sup>25</sup> These words and actions are further indexed by the phrase, “in the night in which he was handed over” (ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδετο).<sup>26</sup> That is to say, this phrase connects the words and actions to an existing narrative of Jesus’ passion and to scriptures informing that narrative, notably Isaiah 53 and certain psalms of the suffering righteous.

Jesus’ word in 1 Cor 11:24 concerning the bread, “this is my body which is for you,” (τοῦτο μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν) not only receives authority as a word of Jesus, but it is also an interpretive saying: ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (“for you”) points to Isaiah 53 as the scriptural memory informing this saying.<sup>27</sup> The act of placing this saying with its scriptural memory on the lips of Jesus establishes him as the key to the reenactment of the cult legend, here identified through its performance in the songs of the suffering righteous in Isaiah. This act grounds the cult legend and ritual in the person of Jesus.

Similarly, the saying of Jesus concerning the cup—“this cup is the new covenant in my blood”—defines this present cult action in relationship to the narrative of the covenant at Sinai in Exodus 24, as I have shown. The phrase “new covenant” indexes the action to the scriptural reshaping of that narrative in Jeremiah 31.<sup>28</sup> One should also notice the obvious, however. To be specific, the traditional saying defines the cultic action of the Corinthian community in terms of an existing reality: the making and renewing of a covenant. Just as the there and then of the cult legend is reenacted in the here and now of the homily in 1 Corinthians 10, so too this utterance allows the practice of the Lord’s Supper to be a reenactment of the foundational cultic ritual.

<sup>25</sup>1 Cor 11:23.

<sup>26</sup>The imperfect form παρεδίδετο is striking. Elsewhere when forms of παραδίδωμι are employed in connection with Jesus’ death, the aorist is customary, as it is in Isa 53:6. The only other instance of the imperfect in this connection is in the hymn in 1 Pet 2:23, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως (“he handed [himself] over to the one who judges justly”). Since both 1 Pet 2:21–24 and 1 Cor 11:23–26 employ early liturgical traditions about Jesus’ passion, one may suspect that the use of the imperfect of παραδίδωμι belongs to the early cultic tradition of Jesus’ death.

<sup>27</sup>Koester, “The Historical Jesus and the Cult of Kyrios Christos,” 16.

<sup>28</sup>See especially Jer 38:31 (LXX). Cf. also Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 199.

One can, however, say more about this saying of Jesus. The phrase “in my blood” locates Jesus, and in particular his death, within the reenacted narrative as the offering that ratifies the covenant. Here one finds, I suggest, an indication that the formation of a narrative of Jesus’ death took place in relation to the community’s practice of renewing the covenant. It is possible to document an analogous process for the formation of the passion narrative in Hebrews, 1 Peter, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, but 1 Corinthians supplies some of the earliest evidence of such a trajectory of interpretation. As with the saying about the bread, this saying and its attribution to Jesus makes his death the pivotal point for the reenactment of the cult legend and ritual.

The quoted tradition also contains the ritual mandate for the continuing practice of the cult with the repeated, “Do this in remembrance of me” (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν).<sup>29</sup> The attribution of this saying to Jesus both gives it authority and contributes to the creation of the memory of Jesus. Specifically, it locates Jesus, the source and founder of the ongoing cultic practices of the community. In other words, it makes him the initiator of the cult. With this in mind, one can return to Jesus’ sayings over the bread and cup with their indices to the story of Jesus’ death and notice that these sayings indirectly portray Jesus as the initiator of the reenactment of the cult legend in the story of his death.

The final indication of what it means to be wise to what the practice of the cultic meal entails appears in 1 Cor 11:26: as often as you do this, you “proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes” (τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ). This verse is probably not part of the quoted tradition that precedes it, although it is woven into it by similarities of diction. It provides the key to understanding the riddle, as it were, by specifying “the death of the Lord” as the center of the ritual. It points, moreover, to the continuing practice of the reenactment of the cult legend in proclamation. The verb of this clause, καταγγέλλω, functions at times as a technical term for the interpretation of an authoritative text in such a way that it is understood as actualized in the present.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the verb refers to the speech event that identifies the authoritative there and then with the present here and now. If this observation is correct, then the

<sup>29</sup>1 Cor 11:24–25.

<sup>30</sup>This appears to be the consistent pattern in Acts; καταγγέλλω refers to the process of proclaiming Jesus as the actualization of the writings of the law and prophets (Acts 3:24; 4:2; 13:38; 17:3) or as the true reference of a cultic inscription (Acts 17:23). The other occurrences of the verb in Acts describe activity in particular connection with Jewish worship (Acts 13:5; 15:36; 17:13) or in close connection to the interpretation of the scriptures (Acts 26:23). The other uses of καταγγέλλω in Pauline writings do not explicitly refer to this process, but in 1 Cor 2:1 and 9:14 refer particularly to apostolic activity.



use of this verb here in 1 Corinthians refers to the formation of a story of Jesus' death out of the authoritative texts of the community, that is, a reenactment of the cult legend.

The cultic meal felicitously performed is that which is successful in its reenactment of the cultic legend. In the Corinthian meal, the foundational legend of the covenant is the death of Jesus. This memory, as an event in ritual and narrative, as well as in the ethic and *koinonia* of the people, becomes for Paul the criterion for the successful performance of the cult. It has, moreover, the power to define the community anew, as the people who "get it" through ethical, affiliative, and intellectual capacities. The memory of Jesus' death thus constitutes a community and provides a certain shared identity within this reenactment of the covenant.

## ■ Conclusion

The memory of Jesus that is constructed in 1 Corinthians 11 through the sayings attributed to him therein concerns not only his death but also his position as the initiator of the cult and the authoritative interpreter of the cultic action in relation to both the passion narrative and the covenant of Israel. In addition to being the initiator and authoritative interpreter of the cult, this Jesus is himself also the interpretation and reenactment of it. The Jesus of 1 Corinthians 11 is also the one who constitutes the community through their performance of the cult. This threefold role is the consequence of a marked utterance that refers to the speaker and which, inasmuch as the community grasps it, defines the identity of the community. It is also a point at which ritual points to itself and to its formation. Such a self-reference is not surprising for a stage of the cult in which there is a significant shift in the terms of the reenactment.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, such a shift occurs when the new event of Jesus' death becomes the center of proper performance of the cultic meal and narrative.

In 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, therefore, it is possible to discern ways in which the scriptures of Israel contribute language, motifs, and patterns for speaking of Jesus and establishing the practice of the community. The practice of covenant meals and the stories of the trials in the wilderness combine with traditions about the suffering righteous to form the means for remembering Jesus. Through the narrative and ritual processes of reenactment this memory constitutes a community in Jesus's name.

<sup>31</sup>Nagy (*Pindar's Homer*, 60, 388) remarks upon the phenomenon of ritual referring to itself as a sign of a crisis of genre and practice. With reference to Euripides, he correlates the phenomenon with the changes in Athenian society at the end of the fifth century BCE and the decline in the importance of the city Dionysiac. I would propose that as cultic practice incorporates the new event of Jesus' death into its reenactment, it too faces a crisis of genre and practice and similarly becomes self-referential.

# The Signification of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians

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One of the many contributions that Helmut Koester has made to New Testament scholarship is his attention to the importance of archaeological and epigraphical evidence for the study of early Christianity. I offer this study as a small token of gratitude to him for that contribution. It attempts to show the importance of certain inscriptions for the signification of the saying attributed to Jesus in Mark 10:45: “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”<sup>1</sup>

Both parts of the saying have links to the Markan context. The claim that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” presents Jesus as the model for a communal life of mutual service advocated in

<sup>1</sup> The antithetical structure of Mark 10:45 and its meaning are strikingly similar to a saying that Dio Cassius attributed to Otho: “I shall free myself [that is, take my own life], that all may learn from the deed that you chose for your emperor one who would not give you up to save himself, but rather himself to save you” (ὅστις οὐχ ὑμᾶς ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλ’ ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν δέδωκε); Dio Cassius 63.13 (ed. and trans. Earnest Cary; LCL; 9 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925) 8. 214–17. I am grateful to Dieter Georgi for calling this passage to my attention. An important difference between it and Mark 10:45, however, is the use of the term λύτρον (“ransom”) in Mark. As I will show below, this term has cultic and expiatory connotations. Although some of the *exempla* cited by Otho have cultic connotations, his own death is portrayed as a noble and honorable death with no such connotations.

verses 41–44. The remark that he came to give his life “as a ransom for many” takes up and clarifies the cryptic question that Jesus puts to the sons of Zebedee in verse 38: “Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am about to be baptized?” Nevertheless, I hesitate to conclude that Mark created the saying *de novo*. Both parts of the saying, separately or together, probably have a pre-Markan history.<sup>2</sup> The reconstruction of that history is beyond the scope of this essay. Rather, my present concern is with how the readers and hearers of Mark’s Gospel in the first three centuries of the Common Era would have understood this saying, and especially its second part.

Those members of the audience intimately familiar with the Jewish scriptures probably would have perceived allusions to Isaiah in this saying. According to the Septuagint version of Isa 53:11, the servant of the Lord is a just man who serves many well (δίκαιον εὖ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς). The following verse adds that “his life was given over to death” (παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ) and that “he bore the sins of many” (καὶ αὐτὸς ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε). The language of “bearing sins” casts the servant in the role of the scapegoat, and the Hebrew version describes him as an offering for sin, as well as a scapegoat.<sup>3</sup> The image of ransom, however, does not occur in this passage. It does of course appear elsewhere in the Jewish scriptures, and informed members of the audience may well have interpreted Mark 10:45 in light of one or more of those occurrences.<sup>4</sup> The focus of this essay, however, is how, in the Roman imperial period, Christians familiar with Hellenistic cultic traditions would have understood the saying.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion in Wolfgang Kraus, *Der Tod Jesu als Heiligtumsweihe: Eine Untersuchung zum Umfeld der Sühnevorstellung in Römer 3,25–26a* (WMANT 66; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991) 194–97. Max Wilcox goes so far as to argue that the entire saying originates with the historical Jesus; see idem, “On the Ransom-Saying in Mark 10:45c, Matt 20:28c,” in Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer, eds., *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, vol. 3: *Frühes Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1996) 173–86.

<sup>3</sup> Isa 53:10 MT.

<sup>4</sup> The noun λύτρον occurs in the singular in Lev 27:31; Prov 6:35; and 13:8. The plural occurs in Exod 21:30 (twice); Exod 30:12; Lev 19:20; 25:24, 26, 51, 52; Num 3:12, 46, 48, 49, 51; 18:15; 35:31, 32; and Isa 45:13. For a discussion of those passages in the Jewish scriptures in which the ransom is for a forfeited life and is paid to God, see Joachim Jeremias, “Das Lösegeld für viele (Mk. 10,45),” *Judaica* 3 (1947–48) 249–64.

<sup>5</sup> In addressing this topic I am taking up a suggestion made by Hans-Josef Klauck in “Die kleinasiatischen Beichtinschriften und das Neue Testament,” in Cancik et al., *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion*, 63–87. I am grateful to him for giving me a pre-publication copy of his article. On p. 80 of the published version he states that the non-Jewish sources in which words related to λύτρον occur are possible indicators of the way Mark 10:45 and 1 Peter 1:18 were understood in the history of the reception of these texts. See also idem, “Heil ohne Heilung?

## ■ Epigraphical Evidence

An inscription that sheds light on this question was found by William M. Ramsay in 1884 in Synaus, a city of Lydia in western Asia Minor. At some point before 1889, the small marble stele containing the inscription was moved to Kula, where Karl Buresch saw it. He published an epigraphical drawing and transcription in his 1898 book *Aus Lydien*. Γαλλικῶ Ἀσκληπιῶς κώμης Κερυζέων πα(ι)δίσκη (Δ)ιογένου λύτρον. This transcription may be translated: To (Men) Gallikos Asklepias, a female slave of the village of the Keryzeis, (dedicates this stele as) a ransom for Diogenes.<sup>6</sup> His transcription of the first word as Γαλλικῶ implies that it is the dative masculine singular of Γαλλικός, which then becomes an ethnic epithet of the god Men, who appears in a bas-relief above the inscription. Men was a Phrygian deity, whose worship is widely attested throughout Anatolia; he was also worshipped in Attica and at other Greek sites. His main symbol was a crescent moon, and he was known especially as a healer, protector of tombs, and giver of oracles. The transcription Ἀσκληπιῶς takes the word as a woman's name. Adolf Deissmann published a photograph of this stele in his *Light from the Ancient East* and, following these transcriptions, translated the inscription as follows: "To Gallicus [= the god Men], Asclepias of the village of Ceryza, maidservant of Liogenes [Diogenes?], presents this ransom." He further suggested that the word λύτρον here probably meant that the woman was releasing herself from a vow.<sup>7</sup>

In 1916, William H. Buckler proposed that the first line be read, Γαλλικῶ Ἀσκληπίας.<sup>8</sup> He thus took Γαλλικῶ to be a woman's name and Ἀσκληπίας to be an adjective modifying κώμης ("village"). His translation therefore reads, "Galliko, female slave of the Asklepiian village of the

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Zu Metaphorik und Hermeneutik der Rede von Sünde und Vergebung im Neuen Testament," in Hubert Frankemölle, ed., *Sünde und Erlösung im Neuen Testament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 18–52. I am grateful also to Hendrik Versnel for calling these inscriptions to my attention in a personal conversation.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Buresch, *Aus Lydien. Epigraphisch-geographische Reisefrüchte* (ed. Otto Ribbeck; Leipzig: Teubner, 1898) 86–89. The drawing and transcription are given on p. 87. The stele is no. 90 in Eugene N. Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis*, vol. 1: *The Monuments and Inscriptions* (EPRO 19; Leiden: Brill, 1971) 59. See also G. H. R. Horsley, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri published in 1977* (North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University Press, 1982) 2. 90 no. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East* (rev. ed.; trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927) 328 n. 1. The photograph is on the facing page (fig. 60). According to William H. Buckler ("Some Lydian Propitiatory Inscriptions," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 21 [1914–16] 169–83), this translation was already given in the 1910 English edition of the book; the reference to Deissmann is on p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Buckler, "Some Lydian Propitiatory Inscriptions," 182.

Keryzeis, [dedicates this as] a ransom of Diogenes.” He rejected the idea of a cult of “Gallic” Men as highly improbable. Eugene Lane, however, argued that the attestation of a cult of Men Italikos suggested that a cult associated with Men Gallikos was no longer improbable. He suggested that the most profitable line of investigation would be in the direction of the Γάλλοι (priests of Cybele), Γαλάται (Galatians), and Γάλλος (the name of several rivers in Asia Minor).<sup>9</sup> The epithet “Gallikos” for Men, however, remains otherwise unattested.<sup>10</sup> In the case of inscriptions of this type, the name of the person dedicating the stele is usually given, but not necessarily in the case of a slave.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the name of a deity whose effigy is depicted on a stele need not appear in the text engraved below that effigy.<sup>12</sup> Buckler’s reading of Γαλλικῶ as a woman’s name, therefore, remains plausible. His interpretation of the ransom as one for Liogenes (or Diogenes) is also more persuasive than Deissmann’s interpretation, since, as Buresch had already pointed out, there is punctuation and a large space between the word πα(ι)δίσκη (“female slave”) and the name Liogenes, whereas the word λύτρον (“ransom”) is placed immediately below the name Liogenes.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in light of other inscriptions from this area, Buckler is convincing when he suggests that the λύτρον is a propitiatory “ransom,” given on behalf of Liogenes/Diogenes, who may have dedicated the stele himself; if, on the other hand, “Galliko” dedicated it, she apparently did so on behalf of Liogenes/Diogenes, who may have been her father or husband.<sup>14</sup> In 1994 Georg Petzl proposed that Λιογένου/Διογένου be taken as a subjective genitive. This interpretation implies that the female slave was the λύτρον of Diogenes, whom he dedicated to the sacred village or to the god as compensation for some offense of his own.<sup>15</sup>

The inscription mentioning “Galliko” or “Gallikos” is undated. Buresch published another inscription containing the word λύτρον, this one dated

<sup>9</sup> Eugene N. Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis*, vol. 3: *Interpretations and Testimonia* (EPRO 19; Leiden: Brill, 1976) 73.

<sup>10</sup> The god Men had many epithets, some of which denote location. He appears on coins from Galatia; one of these, which dates to Trajan’s reign, may depict a cult statue of Men in a temple in the Galatian capital, Ankyra. See Rainer Vollkommer, “Men,” *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (8 vols. in 16; Zürich: Artemis, 1992) 6. 1.462–73, esp. 462, 466–67, and 472. As far as I have been able to discover, however, the epithet “Gallikos” is not attested. I am grateful to Anniewies van den Hoek for calling this important lexicon to my attention.

<sup>11</sup> See Avery Cameron, “Inscriptions Relating to Sacral Manumission and Confession,” *HTR* 32 (1939) 143–79, esp. 154.

<sup>12</sup> Buckler, “Some Lydian Propitiatory Inscriptions,” 182.

<sup>13</sup> Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, 88.

<sup>14</sup> Buckler, “Some Lydian Propitiatory Inscriptions,” 183.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Petzl, ed., *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens* (Epigraphica Anatolica: Zeitschrift für Epigraphik und historische Geographie Anatoliens 22; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1994) xi n. 16.

to 143 CE.<sup>16</sup> This inscription has been transcribed and translated as follows:

Ἔτους σκζ' Ἀρτεμίδω(ρος) Διοδότου καὶ Ἀμιάς μετὰ  
τῶν συγγενῶν ἐξ ἰδότην καὶ μὴ ἰδότην λύτρον κατ'  
ἐπιταγὴν Μηνὶ Τυράννω καὶ Διὶ Ὀγμηνῶ καὶ τοῖς  
σὺν αὐτῷ θεοῖ(ς).

Year 227 (= 143 CE). Artemidoros son of Diodotos and Amias with their relatives, both those who are aware and those who are not (?), [dedicated this as] a ransom, in accordance with an injunction, to Men Tyrannos and Zeus Ogmenos and the gods in his company.<sup>17</sup>

This translation implies that some, but not all, of the relatives were aware of something, perhaps the sin that had to be “ransomed” or the fact that a stele was being dedicated. In 1962, another inscription was published, in which the phrase ἐξ εἰδότην καὶ μὴ εἰδότην occurs. In this second text, however, the phrase clearly does not modify the relatives.<sup>18</sup> The inscription as a whole reads: Μῆνα ἐγ Διοδότου Ἀλέξανδρος Θαλούσης μετὰ Ἰουλίου καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς ἐλυτρώσαντο τὸν θεὸν ἐξ εἰδότην καὶ μὴ εἰδότην. Ἔτους σλγ'. “Alexander, son of Thalouse, with Julius and his sister paid to the god Men of Diodotos a ransom for things known and not known. Year 233 (= 148–49 CE).”<sup>19</sup> Lane argued that, however awkward and difficult it may seem, the only proper explanation involved taking the active participles “knowing” and “not knowing” passively.<sup>20</sup> The inscription thus attests a ritual act by means of which people secured their release from the effects of deliberate and unwitting sins. The ritual act may have involved the payment of a sum of money to functionaries of the cult of Men founded by Diodotos, or it may simply have been identical with the process of setting up the stele itself.

Another difficulty of the inscription found in 1962 is that the name of the deity appears in the accusative case instead of the dative. G. H.

<sup>16</sup> Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, 87. This inscription is no. 61 in Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis*, 1. 41–42.

<sup>17</sup> Transcription and translation are from Horsley, *New Documents* 1977, 90 no. 58.

<sup>18</sup> Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis*, 1. 44 no. 66. See the discussion in *ibid.*, 3. 22–23.

<sup>19</sup> Transcription and translation are from Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978* (North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University Press, 1983) 3. 72 no. 46.

<sup>20</sup> Lane, *Corpus Monumentum Religionis*, 3. 22–23.

R. Horsley argued that the middle form of the verb implies that Alexander and the others are ransoming themselves, and thus he translated the accusative Μῆννα as if it were dative. The syntax of the inscription, however, implies that the notion of “ransom” was not always present. In other words, the verb λυτροῦμαι in this case is synonymous with ἱλάσκειν, with the meaning “propitiate, cause a deity to become favorably inclined.” The implication is that Alexander, Julius, and his sister had lost divine favor because of some offense for which the ritual act serves as expiation.<sup>21</sup>

Many of the inscriptions using the word λύτρον and its cognates appear to belong to a larger group known as “the confessional inscriptions of western Asia Minor.”<sup>22</sup> The sequence of offense, misfortune interpreted as punishment for the offense, and “ransoming” or propitiation, sometimes involves persons other than the offending individual. In cases involving death, relatives made amends, either to the gods alone or to the gods and people harmed by the offense. The punishment likewise could fall upon other members of the family.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, it is interesting to note that later Christian inscriptions use the word λύτρον in the same way as these Lydian inscriptions. For example, a fifth or sixth-century CE inscription from Cilicia speaks of two painted wooden icons that the clergy have dedicated λύτρον χάριν (“as a ransom,” or “as propitiation”) for some offense. Similarly, a seventh-century inscription from the Mount of Olives attests that a certain Symeon built and dedicated an oratory for “our master, Christ” ὑπὲρ λύτρον τῶν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν κ(αὶ) ἀναπαύσεως τῶν αὐτοῦ ἀδελφ(ῶν) (“for a ransom of his sins and to set his brothers at rest”).<sup>24</sup>

## ■ The Usage and Meaning of λύτρον

As already indicated, scholars usually translate λύτρον as “ransom.” This translation implies that the donors of these inscriptions understood their ritual acts by analogy with the practices of ordinary and sacral

<sup>21</sup> Compare the discussion by Klauck (“Die kleinasiatischen Beichtinschriften,” 79–82), in which he shows that normally the words λύω, λύτρον and λυτρόομαι represent the act of atonement (that is, the removal of the problem), whereas the terms ἱλάσκειν and ἐξιλάσκειν are used to express the result of the process. Terms from the two word groups seem to be synonymous in two inscriptions in Petzl’s collection (*Beichtinschriften*, 54.16 and 65.27–32 [pp. 63, 89]).

<sup>22</sup> Note the title of Klauck’s article, in which he follows Franz Seraph Steinleitner, *Die Beicht im Zusammenhange mit der sakralen Rechtspflege in der Antike* (Munich: Wild, 1913); and Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*.

<sup>23</sup> See the examples cited and the discussion in Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis*, 3. 30.

<sup>24</sup> See Horsley, *New Documents* 1978, 3. 74.

manumission.<sup>25</sup> The verb ἀπολύω, for example, appears in an inscription regarding the act of manumitting two female slaves by dedication to a goddess.<sup>26</sup> Deissmann referred to three documents from Oxyrhynchus relating to manumissions dating from the years 86, 100, and 91 or 107 CE that use the word λύτρον.<sup>27</sup> Two of these use the phrase ἐπὶ λύτροις (“by ransom”) to indicate that the slave has obtained freedom through the payment of a sum of money, probably at his or her own initiative.<sup>28</sup> In the third document, one of two brothers emancipating a slave says that he has received “the ransom” (τὰ λύτρα), that is, a sum of money.<sup>29</sup> If the logic of the ritual act derives from the social practices associated with manumission, the practice implies that human beings, by committing offenses against the gods, make themselves slaves of the gods and must pay a sum or perform a ritual act to free themselves. Thereafter they can resume good relations with the deity.<sup>30</sup>

A closely related set of social practices has to do with the ransoming of prisoners of war.<sup>31</sup> A peace treaty between Miletos and Magnesia from the second century BCE states that the Magnesians gave the Milesian prisoners of war to the Rhodians “without ransom” (ἄνευ λύτρου).<sup>32</sup> An inscription from Delphi, also in the context of war and dating to the first century BCE, states that Ammia released (ἀπέλυσε) Synphoros from service (τῶς παραμονῶς) after having achieved [her own] ransoming from the enemy (λαβοῦσα λύτρα ἐκ πολεμίων).<sup>33</sup> The logic of the ritual act from this

<sup>25</sup> So Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 327–28; so also Klauck (“Die kleinasiatischen Beichtinschriften,” 80), who mentions Steinleitner and Franz Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom*, vol. 2: *Die sogenannte sakrale Freilassung in Griechenland und die δοῦλοι ἱεροί* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse 1960/61; Mainz: Steiner, 1960), as well as Deissmann and Cameron. Klauck also mentions S. R. Llewelyn and R. A. Kearsley, eds., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 1980–81* (North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University Press, 1992) 6. 70–81. I was, however, unable to find the word group λύτρον in the documents cited and discussed there. The word group ἐλευθερία is very common in them; ἀφίημι and τιμή also occur.

<sup>26</sup> Cameron, “Sacral Manumission and Confession,” 154.

<sup>27</sup> Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 327–28.

<sup>28</sup> See Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (63 vols.; London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898–1996) 1. 105–7.

<sup>29</sup> Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 4. 199–203.

<sup>30</sup> This is the interpretation proposed by Steinleitner, which is summarized by Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis*, 3. 22 n. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Wilcox (“On the Ransom-Saying,” 178) argues that the term λύτρον in Mark 10:45 should be interpreted in relation to payment for release of prisoners or hostages. He supports this conclusion with reference to the usage of the term by Josephus.

<sup>32</sup> *SIG* 3 588. 68–69, cited in Horsley, *New Documents* 1978, 3. 74.

<sup>33</sup> *SIG* 2863. 4, cited in Horsley, *New Documents* 1978, 3. 74.



perspective is that human beings who have committed offenses are captives of the gods, suffering disease or other punishment, and that they must pay a sum or perform a ritual act to move the gods to free them from this captivity.<sup>34</sup>

Petzl included two inscriptions in his collection that imply that the offender is held captive by the god. One of these quotes the god Men as saying, "You may open the prison (φυλακή), I release (ἐξάφίω) the offender."<sup>35</sup> The other inscription notes that the gods have confined a woman to a temple as divine punishment.<sup>36</sup> Petzl leaves open the possibility that these confinements were literal but notes that Ender Varinlioglu has interpreted them metaphorically.<sup>37</sup> The inference that the confinement was literal finds support in evidence from the collected papers of Ptolemaios, son of Glaukias, an archive from the Sarapieion in the Egyptian city of Memphis. These papers date from the middle of the second century BCE.<sup>38</sup> This man came to the Sarapieion in 172 BCE and, like a number of his contemporaries, was "held" there by the god. This κατοχή ("captivity") involved physical confinement to a pastophorion (a storeroom or a priest's cell shared with another detainee); this one was located in the Astarteion.<sup>39</sup>

Since the evidence is limited, various interpretations of this "possession" or "detention" have been proposed. In 1927 Ulrich Wilcken published almost all of the Greek evidence relevant to the discussions, and some of the Demotic.<sup>40</sup> Some scholars have argued that the detention had a legal origin, arising from debt or misdemeanor.<sup>41</sup> Others have concluded that the detention was primarily religious, following an omen or sign and involving some form of self-dedication of the detainee.<sup>42</sup> Referring to Canaanite precedents, Lienhard Delekat adopted elements from both approaches.<sup>43</sup> Since the detainees in Memphis were involved in the cult of Astarte, it may be

<sup>34</sup> Lane (*Corpus Monumentorum Religionis*, 3. 22) has proposed an explanation of this type.

<sup>35</sup> Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*, 5.24 (p. 8).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.2–3 (p. 39).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Dorothy J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 212–65. I am grateful to Janet H. Johnson for referring me to Thompson's work on this subject.

<sup>39</sup> This shrine dedicated to Astarte was part of the Sarapieion complex. See Thompson, *Memphis*, 214, 215–18.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 217; Ulrich Wilcken, ed., *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde)*, vol. 1: *Papyri aus Unterägypten* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927). Lienhard Delekat and Willy Clarysse have reassessed some of the evidence; see Thompson, *Memphis*, 217.

<sup>41</sup> K. Sethe (1913); F. von Woess (1923) and others; see Thompson, *Memphis*, 217 and n. 26. According to this interpretation, the detention is related to the right of asylum.

<sup>42</sup> See Ulrich Wilcken (*Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*) and earlier scholars whom he cites; for full bibliographical information see Thompson, *Memphis*, 217–18 and n. 27.

<sup>43</sup> See Thompson, *Memphis*, 217 n. 27.

that the practice of detention derived from Phoenicia or Canaan.<sup>44</sup> The custom of detention in western Asia Minor may have derived from or been influenced by similar practices in Phoenicia, Canaan, or Egypt. The confessional inscriptions from western Asia Minor collectively suggest, then, that such detentions had both legal and religious aspects.

Carolyn Osiek has shown that Christians in the second century were more concerned with ransoming prisoners than with freeing slaves. Moreover, they adapted to changing circumstances the traditional exhortation to ransom prisoners so that the focus came to be upon efforts to secure the release of Christians imprisoned for their faith. Such release was obtained by bribing minor officials in whose custody the condemned “criminals” were kept.<sup>45</sup> A passage from the *Didache* shows, however, that the understanding of ransom expressed in the inscriptions of Asia Minor was also familiar to Christians of this period:

Be not one who stretches out his hands to receive, but shuts them when it comes to giving. Of whatsoever you have gained by your hands you shall give a ransom (λύτρωσιν) for your sins. You shall not hesitate to give, nor shall you grumble when you give, for you shall know who is the good paymaster of the reward.<sup>46</sup>

The cultic act has been transformed into the practice of giving alms or contributing to the common chest, but the symbolic framework of meaning is the same: sins are to be “ransomed” or “expiated” by some act that pleases the deity.

## ■ Magical and Religious Usage of λύτρω

The word group λύω also plays a role in the Greek magical papyri. Many spells make use of the language of binding, for example, a spell recommended as a “wondrous spell for binding a lover.”<sup>47</sup> Other magical texts use language of loosing. A fragmentary text that may be a horoscope mentions a “spell of release.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, a bilingual Greek and Coptic

<sup>44</sup> Thompson, *Memphis*, 218 and n. 32.

<sup>45</sup> Carolyn Osiek, “The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition,” *HTR* 74 (1981) 365–86.

<sup>46</sup> *Did.* 4.5–7.

<sup>47</sup> *PGM* IV. 296–466. The Greek title is Φιλτροκατάδεσμος θαυμαστός (line 296). The English translation is by Edward N. O’Neil in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 44–47. The Greek text is from Karl Preisendanz, ed., *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928) 1. 83–88.

<sup>48</sup> *PGM* III. 275–81. The Greek term is ἀπόλυ(σιν) (line 279). Trans. by Edward N. O’Neil in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 26. Text in Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1. 44.

spell for revelation contains the following statement in the instructions for the phylactery: "Here is what is to be written (ἔστιν δὲ τὰ γραφόμενα): I bind and loose (*Shteit Chien Tenha*)."<sup>49</sup> In another text the would-be magician is told: "If you want to break spells (ἐὰν πρὸς λύσιν φαρμάκων): having written the Name on a page of hieratic papyrus, wear it."<sup>50</sup> Finally, a charm to counter enchantment contains the words, "dissolve every enchantment against me, NN, for I conjure you by the great and terrible names which the winds fear and the rocks split when they hear it [*sic*]." The opening words of the command read, λύσατε πᾶν φάρμακον ("break every spell").<sup>51</sup>

These magical texts reflect viewpoints similar to those which some scholars find in the confessional inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions may be understood to mean that human beings who are suffering misfortune consider themselves to be captives of the gods who send adversity as punishment for offenses. The ritual act releases humans from such captivity. Analogously, the magical texts suggest that human beings may suffer misfortune because they are bound by a spell. Such spells are the work of other human beings, usually with divine or at least suprahuman assistance. Just as magicians can bind by casting spells, they can also loose, break, or dissolve those spells by means of a ritual act.

Also relevant are two gold leaves discovered in a burial in Thessaly, dating to the end of the fourth century BCE.<sup>52</sup> The text presupposes that the deceased initiate is to stand before the judgment seat of Persephone to answer her questions. The initiate is able to say, "I have been released by Bakchios himself" (Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε).<sup>53</sup> The release apparently oc-

<sup>49</sup> *PGM* IV. 52–85. The citation is from lines 82–83. Trans. by Hubert Martin, Jr., and Marvin W. Meyer in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 38. Text in Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1. 70.

<sup>50</sup> *PGM* XIII. 1–343. The citation is from lines 253–54. Trans. by Morton Smith in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 172–82. Text in Karl Preisendanz and Albert Henrichs, eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2d rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974) 2. 87–105. See also *PGM* XXXVI. 178–87 ("a charm to break spells" [Λυσιφάρμακον]); and *PGM* LXX. 26–51, esp. line 26 ("against fear and to dissolve spells" [πρὸς φόβον καὶ ἀναλύων]).

<sup>51</sup> *PGM* XXXVI. 256–64. Trans. by Morton Smith in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 275. Text in Preisendanz and Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2. 171. The text of an exorcistic phylactery from Xanthos (dating from the fourth to the sixth century CE), adjures the demon to release (ἀλλάσσω and ἀπαλλάσσω) the living one (perhaps the one who wears the phylactery) from him who (or that which) holds him (συνέλοντος); see David R. Jordan and Roy D. Kotansky, "Two Phylacteries from Xanthos," *Rev. Arch.* (1996) 161–74, esp. 168, 171.

<sup>52</sup> The gold leaves were published by K. Tsantsanoglou and George M. Parássoglou, "Two Gold Lamellae from Thessaly," *Hellenica* 38 (1987) 3–16.

<sup>53</sup> See the discussion by Reinhold Merkelbach, "Zwei neue orphisch-dionysische Totenpässe," *ZPE* 76 (1989) 15–16. I am grateful to Hans Dieter Betz for this reference.

curred during the lifetime of the deceased through the proper sacrifices and rites.<sup>54</sup> Dionysos is one of the λύσιοι θεοί and is variously called Λύσιος, Λύσειος, Λυσεύς, and Λυσαῖος, which may mean “deliverer from curse or sin.” His rites were called λύσιοι.<sup>55</sup>

## ■ Conclusion

The confessional inscriptions describe and presuppose interactions between human beings and the gods. In this complex of ideas, the λύτρον word group has several layers of meaning, including: ransom from slavery, ransom from captivity, and release from hidden bonds that cause misfortune.

The saying in Mark 10:45 differs from the confessional inscriptions in that the “ransom” it describes did not occur by means of a ritual act. I use the word “ritual” in the restricted sense of a procedure regulated by an established cult. Those familiar with such ritual acts in the first few centuries of the Common Era, however, probably would have perceived the same layers of meaning in this saying that were present in the inscriptions. The “many” could be those enslaved to God because of their offenses. The death of Jesus could then be interpreted as an act that won God’s favor for the many by compensating for those offenses. On another level of meaning, the “many” are those in captivity to or bound by misfortunes, such as demon possession or illness. The ancients viewed such misfortunes as God’s direct punishment for sin or as the work of evil spirits and demons permitted by God. This level of meaning could emerge from the broader context of the entire Gospel of Mark, in which exorcism and healing play such a great role. Finally, the word λύτρον could be understood as a synonym of ἱλαστήριον (“expiation” or “propitiation”). In the inscriptions both word groups may be associated with sacrifice, but not necessarily.<sup>56</sup> In 4 Macc 17:22, the deaths of Eleazar, the mother, and her seven sons are described as an expiation (ἱλαστήριον). Since blood is mentioned in the immediate context, the passage evokes the notion of sacrifice.<sup>57</sup> An analogous understanding of the death of Jesus informs Rev 1:5–6: “To the one who loves us and ‘ransomed’ (λύω) us from our sins by his blood. . . to him be glory and power forever. Amen.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, “Two Gold Lamellae from Thessaly,” 12.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> See Klauck, “Die kleinasiatischen Beichtinschriften,” 79–82.

<sup>57</sup> Note the complementary use of ἀπολύτρωσις and ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:24–25 and of ἐξιλασμός and ἀπολύω in 2 Macc 12:45.

<sup>58</sup> Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ . . . αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. ἀμήν.

The significance of the confessional inscriptions and the related texts that I have discussed lies in their demonstration that, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the word group λύω served to speak of transactions between human beings and gods in which sins were forgiven and offenses expiated, and thus, not only in the contexts of the manumission of slaves and the ransoming of captives. The evidence suggests that the notion of the Son of Man giving his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45) belongs to the same complex of ideas as the saying over the cup (Mark 14:24), according to which the blood of Jesus was poured out for many. At least from the point of view of their reception among Gentiles familiar with Hellenistic cults, both sayings interpret the death of Jesus by describing it in a metaphorical way as a ritual expiation of the offenses of many.

# Apocalyptic Traditions in the Lukan Special Material: Reading Luke 18:1–8

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Contemporary New Testament scholarship gives evidence of two trends. Some scholars, particularly those interested in the historical Jesus or the source of collected logia (Q) are going backward, trying to reach Christian origins and still influenced by the romantic dream of the pure beginning.<sup>1</sup> Others are pressing forward, tracing the development of early Christian traditions, both in the canonical and non-canonical texts (particularly the Nag Hammadi Codices) in an attempt to follow the several streams of Christianity. These scholars continue to be influenced by the philosophical construction of organic evolution.<sup>2</sup>

In his long and creative career, Helmut Koester took into consideration both approaches. He has argued that no quest for the historical Jesus can succeed without due consideration of the motives of the early church,<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>The influence of the Enlightenment is still perceptible, and the work of Johann Gottfried Herder merits reinvestigation.

<sup>2</sup>It is well known that Charles Darwin's and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's work has had a formidable impact upon theologians and scholars, such as Ferdinand Christian Baur and Johann Adam Möhler in the nineteenth century, and many New Testament exegetes of the twentieth.

<sup>3</sup>See his dissertation, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (TU 65; Berlin: Akademie, 1957).

that no trajectory from the earliest sayings to Justin Martyr or Valentinus can be reconstructed unless it originates with Jesus the victim.<sup>4</sup> At the risk of speaking extravagantly, I would say that our colleague has always been like one of the angels of John 1:51, “ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). In this paper, I shall try to walk in his footsteps and apply his methodology. Accordingly, I seek to trace the trajectory back from Luke to the historical Jesus, while still respecting the influence of the original events upon later developments.

I shall work on a passage from Luke’s special material (*Sondergut*), because recent scholarship has for the most part neglected this source. A rapid glance at the many new studies on Jesus shows that the Lukan special material in general and Luke 18:1–8 (the parable of the unjust judge and the insistent widow) in particular play no significant role. This same regrettable neglect appears to extend also to the study of the early Christian communities and the reception of Jesus’ teaching in the first centuries.

My task is not an easy one, because the distinction of layers, the separation of redaction and tradition, is problematic with respect to this passage. As modern scholars have drawn them, the diverging reconstructions of the evolution of the short parable from its earliest oral stage to its final written version by Luke are proof and witness of the difficulty of this task.<sup>5</sup> The genetic analysis of the passage becomes more difficult because the story is simple only at a superficial level. Even its Greek presents difficulties: what is the meaning of εἰς τέλος in verse 5: “till the end” or “finally”? Also in verse 5, should the rare verb ὑπωπιάζω be taken literally (“to strike under the eye,” “to give a black eye”) or metaphorically (“to bruise,” “to mortify”)”? Does the present tense λέγει (“he says”) in verse 6 refer to the following or preceding sentences? In verse 7b, what is the meaning of μακροθυμῶ: “to be patient” or “to be late”? And why the present tense after the future perspective of verse 7a (“And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones”)”? Finally, in verse 8a, does ἐν τάχει mean “soon” or “quickly”?

Despite these philological difficulties, the inquiry into the development of this pericope is worth undertaking, because the text impinges on such

<sup>4</sup>See Helmut Koester, “Jesus the Victim,” *JBL* 111 (1992) 3–15.

<sup>5</sup>The reader can judge this from the general overview presented some years ago by Heinrich Zimmermann, “Das Gleichnis vom Richter und der Witwe (Lk 18,1–8),” in Rudolf Schnackenburg, Josef Ernst, and Joachim Wanke, eds., *Die Kirche des Anfangs. Festschrift für Heinz Schürmann* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978) 79–95; more recently, Charles W. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 187–207; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Volume 2: 9:51–24:53* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996) 1444–56.

major issues as the early Christian eschatological expectation in a time of divine silence. Study of this pericope also may shed new light upon a neglected early Christian community, the community that authored the Lukan special material.

In this paper, therefore, I shall try to disentangle the several layers of the text. Furthermore, I begin with the assumption that the text as it stands is the result of several successive reinterpretations, which now exist in tension and, at the same time, relate to one another in a manner analogous to a cybernetic system. I shall work backward from the Lukan redaction to the redaction of the special material, and then to the traditions lying behind these two successive rewritings. By trying to understand the several versions of the story, I have as a further objective to uncover and isolate the early Christian community behind the Lukan special material.

## ■ The Lukan Redaction

As usual, the exegete finds the Lukan redactional activity in the framework of the parable and in its placement within the larger literary context of the Third Gospel. Several scholars, such as Walter Grundmann and Joseph Fitzmyer,<sup>6</sup> rightly connect the parable with the apocalyptic speech of Luke 17.<sup>7</sup> Others, such as Roland Meynet,<sup>8</sup> underline several parallels between this parable and the succeeding parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14).<sup>9</sup>

Within this particular passage, the Lukan rewriting is most evident at the beginning and end of the pericope. Luke 18:1 is full of redactional expressions: “to be necessary” (δεῖν), “to pray” (προσεύχασθαι).<sup>10</sup> The same is true of verse 8b, where the particle for restriction “and yet” (πλὴν), and the expression “on earth” (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) are typical of Luke.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup>See Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (2d ed.; ThHKNT 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1969) 346; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981–85) 2. 1175–76.

<sup>7</sup>Luke 17:8b: “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” reveals a connection with 17:37: “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather” and 17:19: “Your faith has made you well.” See Eduard Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas übersetzt und erklärt* (NTD 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) 184.

<sup>8</sup>Roland Meynet, *L'Évangile selon saint Luc. Analyse rhétorique* (2 vols.; Paris: Cerf, 1988) 1. 171–75; 2. 176–77; idem, *Avez-vous lu saint Luc? Guide pour la rencontre* (Lire la Bible 88; Paris: Cerf, 1990) 211–13.

<sup>9</sup>Both texts use the term παραβολή (verses 1 and 9), and an interpretation follows each parable (verses 6–8, and 14). In both texts the verb “to say” is important, and the topic is the prayer.

<sup>10</sup>“To get tired” (ἐγκακεῖν) is known in the Pauline and deutero-Pauline epistles and thus is also appropriate for Luke.

<sup>11</sup>The last expression is also known by Matthew and Mark (see Matt 9:6 and Mark 2:10, for example).



Verses 1 and 8b are characterized by a number of literary motifs characteristic of Luke's pastoral focus. Their manifest concern over the delay of the Parousia, the theological relationship between faith and prayer, the existential bond between God and the individual believer, and the mediation of the Son of Man consistently reflect Lukan concerns.<sup>12</sup>

It is probable that Luke also has corrected verses 7–8a, the explanation of the parable, by inserting a gloss (Luke 18:7b) explicating the delay of the Parousia.<sup>13</sup> The Lukan reinterpretation is: Certainly God will vindicate his elect, but for the time being he will be slow, or "late."<sup>14</sup>

## ■ The Redaction of the Lukan Special Material

Stories such as the Good Samaritan, Martha and Mary, Zachaeus, and the Journey to Emmaus, have universally been loved by Sunday school children and admired by professional exegetes.<sup>15</sup> The parable under discussion shares the same high literary quality. Scholars usually grant Luke the victory crown for literary excellence. In my opinion, however, the crown and the praise belong to the author of Luke's special source (*Sondergut*),<sup>16</sup> a greater author than Luke.

An expression like "who neither feared God, nor had respect for people" in verse 2 echoes the language of the Prodigal Son, who confesses having sinned "against heaven and before you" (Luke 15:18, 21). Internal dialogues and monologues are literary devices that this author employs with considerable skill. Compare this form (verses 4–5) with that of the parable of the rich man (Luke 12:17–19), or its content with another very similar parable of the Lukan special material, the parable of the friend disturbed during the night (Luke 11:7–8).

<sup>12</sup>See Gerhard Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse im Lukas-Evangelium* (SBS 74; Stuttgart: KBW, 1975) 71–78; Gerhard Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas. Kapitel 11–24* (2d ed.; Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament 3/2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1984) 360; Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *L'eschatologie dans l'œuvre de Luc. Ses caractéristiques et sa place dans le développement du christianisme primitif* (Nouvelle série théologique 22; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1969) 37. Luke's interpretation of the parable seems to be influenced by Sir 35:15–19; see Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions*, 188 n. 3.

<sup>13</sup>I do not take the phrase καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτούς to be a question. In declining to do so I am diverging from the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup>For this interpretation of μακροθυμῶ, see Harald Riesenfeld, "Zu μακροθυμεῖν (Lk 18,7)," in Josef Blinzler et al., eds., *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze. Festschrift für Josef Schmid* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1963) 214–17.

<sup>15</sup>Luke 10:30–36, 38–42; 19:1–10; 24:13–32. The results of a poll of school children in Germany revealed that the best known stories of the Bible are practically all from what scholars have determined to be Luke's special material.

<sup>16</sup>Under the category of Lukan special material, I consider only material that appears in the sections proper to Luke, which can be found in Luke 3–24. The documents used by the evangelist in the birth and infancy narratives are from another origin.

The author's artistry, his attention to psychological reaction, his articulation of the tension between a good action and a bad intention, all indicate a high level of education and, indeed, some level of philosophical training.<sup>17</sup> For this writer as for Luke, the main character of the parable is the oppressed woman, the neglected widow. She earns this focal attention because she is unfortunate and because she tries to remedy her bad fortune. Her courage and perseverance are of paramount concern to this author, who is responsible for a rewriting of the parable, and especially for the lesson of verse 8a, introduced by the marker words, "I tell you" (λέγω ὑμῖν): "I tell you that he [God] will soon grant justice." This lesson is an expression of hope for the community, which identifies itself with the widow. The widow's insistent request is a parabolic expression of the ongoing prayer of the believers. This interpretation of the parable departs from the Lukan one on two points. First, the author of the special material insists on the prayers of the chosen ones, of the community; whereas Luke underscores the prayer, faith, and commitment of the individual believer. Second, the author of the special material (despite a Greek education) evinces a strong apocalyptic expectation. For this author, God's vindication is scheduled for "soon" (ἐν τάχει, verse 8a); for Luke, the present time is characterized by the delay of the Parousia.<sup>18</sup>

## ■ The Tradition of the Special Material

In an effort to go behind the composition of Luke's source, one might consider verse 7a: "And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?"<sup>19</sup> Here, at the parable's center, one finds not only the human side (the widow of the parable, or the chosen ones of the interpretation) but especially the divine side (the judge of the parable, and God in the interpretation). This sentence reflects an older interpretation of the parable, an interpretation that I would attribute to the oral layer of the special material. According to this interpretation, God, the supreme judge, will come soon to vindicate his people. The widow has become here a metaphor for the remnant of Israel. The decisive expression "his chosen ones," "his elect" confirms this understanding of the widow. Moreover, the prayers of this community are a collective, liturgical, and ethical activity. This group of faithful and patient believers are, says the text, "crying. . . day and night." The verb βοῶ ("to cry") is an evocative way of alluding

<sup>17</sup>See particularly Gerd Petzke, *Das Sondergut des Evangeliums nach Lukas* (Zürcher Werkkommentare zur Bibel; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1990).

<sup>18</sup>See François Bovon, *Luc le théologien. Vingt-cinq ans de recherches (1950–1975)* (2d ed.; Le Monde de la Bible; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1988) 11–84.

<sup>19</sup>Verse 7b has been registered as a Lukan addition in harmony with verse 8b.

to the torments of this early Christian group, isolated and marginalized, separated from its Lord and fervently awaiting the Parousia.

This community neither received nor transmitted Jesus' parable without interpretation, without biblical connections and an awareness of biblical intertextuality. The voices of its prophets invite the community to connect the pair judge/widow to the relationship between God and Israel, as it appears in the Hebrew scriptures.<sup>20</sup> The judge's laziness corresponds to God's silence and Jesus' absence. The beseeching widow, like the "chosen ones," the "elect" of this early Christian community, searches for a positive self-definition. As a collective entity, the widow (who represents the "chosen ones"), although separated from her husband, hopes nonetheless for a reunion with God (as the expression "coming to him" in verse 3 makes clear).

I should note at this point that parables can draw their rhetorical strength either from their ability to evoke everyday life, or from the exceptional character of the episode they relate. German scholars use the term *Gleichnis* for the first type and *Parabel* for the second.<sup>21</sup> Luke 18:1–8 evidently belongs to the second type of parable. The unexpected corruption of the judge is an integral part of the story, a story that functions through an argument *a minori ad maius*: If such a judge finally gives an answer, how much more will God ultimately respond to our supplications. Despite the negative portrayal of the judge, for the early Christian interpreters the story could still serve as an analogy for God. For these first interpreters, who were probably prophets of that early Christian community, the parable had a single and unambiguous meaning. "Yes," they say to the people of God, "you are like the widow, but God is like the judge and even better than the judge. He will come soon and vindicate you, his elect. Do not be afraid, do not be upset."

Going further back to verse 6, one encounters perhaps the oldest interpretation given by the early Christian prophets.<sup>22</sup> The formal introduction: εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος ("And the Lord said") is a marker of development, of retelling the story, of first interpretation. In contrast to the later reading, here the focus lies entirely on the judge (subject of the verb λέγει, "he says"), and this first commentary approaches the original meaning of the parable. Actually, verse 6 is not even an interpretation, but an interpellation,

<sup>20</sup>On God as a judge, see Gen 16:5; 18:25; 31:53; and Ps 7:11. For Israel as a widow, see Isa 54:4. God's care for the widows appears in Deut 10:18 and Ps 68:5. For God and Israel as a married couple, see Isa 54:5–8; Jer 2:2; 3:8–9; Ezek 16:6–14; and Hos 2–3.

<sup>21</sup>See Eta Linnemann, *Gleichnisse Jesu. Einführung und Auslegung* (6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 13–14.

<sup>22</sup>That is, unless this sentence is just the beginning of the interpretation of verse 7a.

a command to listen, similar to the saying “let anyone with ears to hear, listen!”<sup>23</sup> The prophet, repeating Jesus’ parable after Easter, is in effect saying: “Listen, fellow Christians, to what the judge says.” Instead of using the past, “the judge said” (εἶπεν), he prefers to underline the duration of that voice with “the judge says” (λέγει).

## ■ The Oldest Story

The judge’s words and deeds constitute an ironic story,<sup>24</sup> related to the freedom of God,<sup>25</sup> but existing originally without any other explanation than the one offered by the context in which the communication occurred.<sup>26</sup> If, in verse 6, there echoes the archaic voice of an early prophet, it is also probable that in verses 2–5 resounds the ironic and original voice of the historical Jesus, transmitted by a prophet and transcribed by the author of the special material.<sup>27</sup> As they now stand, these verses undoubtedly bear the mark of the author of the special narrative and probably also of Luke himself; but the plot of the story, the choice of the characters, and the abrasive nature of the incident may reveal the teaching of the historical Jesus.

## ■ Conclusion

At this point, let me summarize the conclusions of this study. First, Luke 18:1–8 is a good example of the development of Jesus’ sayings and parables in the life of the early church. A terse, rather shocking parable (verses 2–5) is preserved by Jesus’ followers. Their memory is not motivated by love for anecdotes or historical evidence. It is a highly partisan, selective memory, that interprets the story before elaborating upon it. In

<sup>23</sup>See, for example, Mark 4:9 or Luke 14:35.

<sup>24</sup>See Wolfgang Harnisch, “Die Ironie als Stilmittel in Gleichnissen Jesu,” *EvTh* 32 (1972) 421–36, esp. 430–36; Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions*, 187, 201–7.

<sup>25</sup>See Hans Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu als Metaphern. Traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Analysen und Interpretationen* (FRLANT 120; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 267–73, esp. 270–71.

<sup>26</sup>Schweizer (*Evangelium nach Lukas*, 184) is of the opinion that, without verses 7 and 8a, the parable would have been incomprehensible unless Jesus had spoken it in a situation that clarified its meaning.

<sup>27</sup>It was not the focus of this paper to compare Luke 18:1–8 with the parable of the friend disturbed during the night (Luke 11:5–8); see Ceslas Spicq, “La parabole de la veuve obstinée et du juge inerte, aux décisions impromptues (Lc 18:1–8),” *RB* 68 (1961) 68–90, esp. 86–87. Some further points of contact should be mentioned between Luke 18:1–8 and Luke 21. In chapter 21, one finds also a widow (Luke 21:1–4), the Christian community in the pronoun “you” (see, for example, Luke 21:12–19), a reflection on the end of time (Luke 21:5–36), the notion of vindication (ἐκδίκησις, Luke 21:22), the suffering of the community (Luke 21:12–24), the necessity of patience (Luke 21:19), and the role of prayer (Luke 21:36).

verse 6, then in verse 7a, then in verse 8a, then finally in verse 8b (and probably also in verse 7b) several successive interpretations emerge. These reinterpretations, like the trajectory of a rocket cruise missile, are a series of reorientations and corrections.

Second, along this trajectory one meets a Christian community with a strong self-identity, united in an intense apocalyptic expectation: the "chosen ones," the "elect" are "crying" intensely "day and night." Their leaders (probably prophets) promise them imminent vindication, an eschatological reversal that should occur in the immediate future as an apocalyptic and cosmic event. In some Christian communities at an early stage, therefore, Jesus' teaching was understood in apocalyptic categories.<sup>28</sup>

Third, this community was Greek-speaking, but with Jewish roots; it strongly identified itself with the true Israel, the "chosen ones."<sup>29</sup> Its prophets exhorted the community during a time of suffering and isolation. Just as creation and the Christians are "groaning" in Romans 8:19–23, here the community is "crying," inasmuch as full redemption remains only a fervent hope. Accordingly, the community is likened to God's spouse, separated from Him but waiting prayerfully during the present time of tribulation.<sup>30</sup>

Is it possible to say something more precise concerning this community? Luke himself comes out of the church of the Hellenists, and Stephen (also a Hellenist) is the only member of the early Christian communities depicted in Luke-Acts as using the title "Son of Man" to refer to Jesus.<sup>31</sup> I would suggest that the topography of the Lukan special material coincides, broadly speaking, with the extension of the Hellenists from Jerusalem to Syria, through Samaria and Galilee (Acts 6:1–8:40; 11:19–30). Jesus' travel narrative in Luke 9–19 could be the prototype and the antitype of the expansion of these communities. If this hypothesis is correct,<sup>32</sup> the "chosen ones" of Luke's special material would be at home in Jerusalem,<sup>33</sup> in Judaea (Bethphage, Bethsaida, and the Mount of Olives [Luke 19:29]), in Jericho (Luke 18:35; 19:1), and in Samaria and Galilee.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup>This has to be emphasized in a period where many historians of early Christianity insist on the wisdom character of Jesus' teaching and of early Christian thought.

<sup>29</sup>This is similar to the viewpoint of the community of Qumran; see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994) 329–39.

<sup>30</sup>Compare the similar relation between the "bride" and the "Lamb" in Rev 18:23; 21:9; and 22:17.

<sup>31</sup>See Acts 7:56; see also Luke 17:22 and Luke 21:36.

<sup>32</sup>I am not aware of any alternative hypothesis that seeks to place the Lukan special material within a particular early Christian group.

<sup>33</sup>Compare Luke 9:51; 13:22; and 19:28.

<sup>34</sup>Luke 9:51–52, 56. The reader will find a full bibliography of this Lukan pericope in vol. 3 of my commentary, *L'Évangile selon saint Luc* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, forthcoming). At

Luke's Gospel provides a fascinating door to the history of early Christianity and to Jesus' fate. By discerning and analyzing the several layers of its composition, modern interpreters gain insight into the evolutionary process of transmission regarding the sayings attributable to Jesus. Step by step they can try to go back to the original teaching of the historical Jesus, but step by step also they can follow the first decades of the early churches: ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

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present, the reader may consult Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 2. 1181–82; or Frans van Segbroeck, *The Gospel of Luke: A Cumulative Bibliography 1973–1988* (BETL 88; Leuven: University Press, 1989) nos. 158, 159a, 311, 531, 854, 925, 1845, 2553, 2584 and 2738.

# The Significance of φιλέω and φίλος in the Tradition of Jesus Sayings and in the Early Christian Communities

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Due in part to the prominence of the word ἀγαπάω in the New Testament, readers of that book have often believed that the early Christians as a group considered ἀγαπάω to refer to a superior form of love than that represented by the Greek word φιλέω. One of the primary reasons for this conviction is the way in which the apostle Paul uses ἀγάπη and ἀγαπάω to such an extent in his epistles. In fact, Paul's usage of the ἀγαπάω word family is so consistent that with one exception the word φιλέω is entirely absent from his vocabulary. Likewise, in the Septuagint the occurrences of ἀγαπάω outnumber those of φιλέω by a ratio of 266 to a mere fifteen.<sup>1</sup>

These figures, however, sharply contrast with the usage of the words in the secular Greek world at the time of Paul: the usage of the ἀγαπάω word family was fairly limited, and the substantive ἀγάπη is unattested before the first century CE.<sup>2</sup> In fact, ἀγάπη was so rare before its appearance in the Septuagint that it was once thought that the translators coined the word.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Feneberg, "φιλέω," in Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 3. 425.

<sup>2</sup> Ceslas Spicq, "ἀγάπη," in James D. Ernest, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (3 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 1. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ethelbert Stauffer, "ἀγαπάω," *TDNT* 1 (1964) 39.

By contrast φιλέω was a common term in Greek society to describe a range of love, including that of friends for friends, parents for children, spouses for one another, and even the gods for humans. As the use of the word developed, its meaning shifted from “that which belongs” to “that which is chosen” or “preferred.”<sup>4</sup>

When one examines New Testament variants and source material, the possibility arises that some first-century Christian communities reflected their Greek-speaking environments in the use of φιλέω. Although the ἀγαπάω word family eventually established its hegemony among the early Christians, Paul himself preserves the evidence that first-century Christians employed the verb φιλέω in their worship when he closes the first epistle to the Corinthians with the words: εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. Μαράνα θά (“If any one does not love the Lord, may a curse be upon him or her. Maranatha”).<sup>5</sup> Since ἀγαπάω appears so frequently in Paul, one has to wonder why he finds this one opportunity to make an exception and chooses to use a different word for “love.” The answer lies in the determination that these concluding words are not part of Paul’s usual vocabulary, but belong instead to the vocabulary of a tradition that he inherited. This seems especially clear since both μαράνα θά and φιλέω occur only here in the epistles of Paul. From a form-critical point of view, moreover, these words appear to belong to a liturgical formula. Thus this passage along with others to be examined in this article serve as evidence of the early usage of the φιλέω word family in the vocabulary of at least some of the early Christian communities.

It is my contention that the φιλέω word family had more significance for some early Christians than is currently recognized. In the ancient world φιλέω often denoted the love of friends, conveying a sense of preferential love and often implying a certain reciprocity.<sup>6</sup> The first-century Christian communities could not have been immune to their environments, including the popularity of φίλος and φιλέω in their linguistic context. The noun φίλος ranged in nuances from “one who is a friend of,” a “loved one,” a “favorite,” to a “follower” of a political leader. The plural of φίλος also often designated members of a philosophical or religious fellowship, such as the Pythagoreans and the Epicureans who called themselves “the friends.”<sup>7</sup> Likewise, some of the early Christians began to use φίλος as a designation

<sup>4</sup> Gustav Stählin, “φίλος,” *TDNT* 9 (1964) 115.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 16:22.

<sup>6</sup> Stählin, “φίλος,” 115.

<sup>7</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902) 1. 435, quoted in Stählin, “φίλος,” 147, 162–63. Likewise, Apollonius of Tyana, a figure exhibiting many parallels to Jesus in the New Testament, called his disciples ἐταῖροι, another Greek synonym for friends. (Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.29.34; 5.21).



for fellow disciples or followers. Evidence of this comes from a statement by Clement of Alexandria, who specifically lists φίλοι as one of the designations typically used for the followers of Jesus: τούτους καὶ τέκνα καὶ παιδία καὶ νήπια καὶ φίλους ὀνομάζει καὶ μικροὺς ἐνθάδε ὡς πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἄνω μέγεθος αὐτῶν ("Those He calls children and young children and babes and friends; also little ones here, in comparison with their future greatness above").<sup>8</sup>

Not everyone, however, employed all these titles. It is logical that in the same way that specific texts clearly have a preference for certain designations for Jesus, such as "Lord," "Savior," or "Son of Man," etc., likewise, specific authors would also have certain designations for believers that would be identifiably theirs. For instance, Paul's most frequently used designations are: τέκνα and ἀδελφοί. Yet he never uses the term φίλοι of Clement's list and uses the term παιδία only once, and then with rather negative connotations: ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε τοῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, τοῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε. ("Brothers, stop thinking like children. With regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults").<sup>9</sup>

The author of the Gospel of John is likewise selective in the use of designations for Jesus' followers, never employing, for example, the term παιδία as a designation for them. Instead, παιδία first appears in the appended chapter of John and is therefore another good example of the distinctive nature of designations for the believers surrounding Jesus. Since John 21 includes tradition in which Jesus addresses his disciples differently, Bultmann states, "It is striking that the following vocables are found only in ch. 21: ἀδελφοί as a designation of Christians, v. 23; further it is surprising to find the disciples addressed as παιδία in verse five."<sup>10</sup> This introduction of new vocabulary indicates that although John 21 still falls within the Johannine school, it was not written by the author of the Gospel of John. As Helmut Koester explains, this chapter was added to the independent Johannine tradition which as a whole was a theological accommodation to Panchristianity.<sup>11</sup> I would submit that the accommodation of certain vocabulary such as specific designations for disciples is likewise intrinsic to this adaptation strategy.

<sup>8</sup> Clement, *ΤΙΣ Ο ΣΩΙΖΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΠΛΟΥΣΙΟΣ* (*The Rich Man's Salvation*) 31. Interestingly, in the Loeb text practically each term mentioned by Clement has a different Gospel as its reference in the footnote (trans. G. W. Butterworth; LCL; Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1953) 334.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor 14:20.

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 700–701.

<sup>11</sup> Helmut Koester, "The Story of the Johannine Tradition," *Sewanee Theological Review* 36 (1992) 17–32.

In the same way that the term *παιδία* labels disciples in the epistles, such as 1 John 2:14 and 2:18 (as well as 3:7 in some variants), so, too, does the term *φίλοι*. For instance, 3 John 15 concludes the letter with the words: *εἰρήνη σοι. ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ φίλοι. ἀσπάζου τοὺς φίλους κατ' ὄνομα* ("Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name"). Here in 3 John *φίλοι* clearly refers to believers or followers of Jesus.

The word *φίλος* occurs in other epistles as well, including twice in James at 2:23 and 4:4. In the first instance, the term functions as a term of high respect as Abraham is called a "*φίλος* of God." Due to the link with Gen 15:6, the meaning of such a title is close to "one who is just through obedience,"<sup>12</sup> implying a distinct sense of reciprocity imbedded within the notion of *φίλος*. In addition to several occurrences of *φίλοι* in James, the related word *φιλία* also occurs in James 4:4. The presence of the *φιλέω* family occurs in other New Testament books as well, such as in Titus 3:15: *ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει* ("Greet the ones loving us in the faith").

## ■ *φίλος* in Luke and Acts

It is not certain where the use of *φίλοι* as a designation for early Christians began, but in the New Testament this usage clearly predominates in Luke-Acts. Luke's writings contain seventeen of the twenty-nine occurrences of the word in the New Testament, as well as the one use of *φίλη*.

The author of Luke-Acts employs the term *φίλοι* as it functions either as a designation for believers or as a more general term, such as in the expression, "friends and relatives" (however, even then it still designates a close-knit circle). Of these occurrences of *φίλος* in Luke, only a few stem from Q (Luke 7:34//Matt 11:19). In the first layer of Q as currently conceived, there are no instances of Jesus or any of the disciples being called a *φίλος*. Just as scholars have shown that the identification of Jesus with the Son of Man came in the second redactional layer of Q, so, too, the reference to Jesus here as a *φίλος* may come from this layer. At this point, *φίλος* carries with it a nuance of preference, not yet appearing as a designation for a believer.

Matt 11:19

ἦλθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων, καὶ  
λέγουσιν, Ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος

Luke 7:34

ἐλήλυθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων, καὶ  
λέγετε, Ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος

<sup>12</sup> "The ἐκλήθη added to the title adopted from the Hebrew scripture a divine passive: God has given Abraham the title 'friend of God.'" See Stählin, "*φίλος*," 168–69.

φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης, τελωνῶν  
φίλος καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν.

The Son of Man came eating  
and drinking, and they say,  
“Here is a glutton and a  
drunkard, a friend of tax  
collectors and ‘sinners.’”

φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης, φίλος  
τελωνῶν καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν.

The Son of Man came eating  
and drinking, and you say,  
“Here is a glutton and a  
drunkard, a friend of tax  
collectors and ‘sinners.’”

Interestingly, except for the above example, numerous instances of the Lukan Q material contain the word φίλοι while the same Q material occurring in Matthew does not. Compare, for example, Matt 10:28 and Luke 12:4–5. In this early saying tradition, Jesus addresses his disciples as a group, specifically referring to them with the epithet τοῖς φίλοις μου. In this case, it is explicitly clear that the Jesus saying incorporates φίλος as a designation for believers or followers, a designation absent from the parallel in Matthew.

Matt 10:28  
καὶ μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν  
ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα,  
τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυνάμενων  
ἀποκτεῖναι· φοβεῖσθε δὲ  
μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ  
ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι  
ἐν γέεννῃ.

Do not be afraid of those who  
kill the body but cannot kill the  
soul. Rather, be afraid of the  
One who can destroy both soul  
and body in hell.

Luke 12:4–5:  
[4] Λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν τοῖς φίλοις μου,  
μὴ φοβηθῆτε ἀπὸ τῶν  
ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα καὶ  
μετὰ ταῦτα μὴ ἐχόντων  
περισσότερόν τι ποιῆσαι.  
[5]. . . φοβήθητε τὸν μετὰ τὸ  
ἀποκτεῖναι ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν  
ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν.

I tell you, my friends, do not be  
afraid of those who kill the body  
and after that can do no more.  
. . . Fear him who, after the  
killing of the body, has power  
to throw you into hell.

This dynamic occurs again when one compares the Q material preserved in Matt 8:8 and its parallel in Luke 7:6:

Matt 8:8  
καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος  
ἔφη, Κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς  
ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην  
εἰσέλθῃς· ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ  
λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου.

Luke 7:6  
ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν  
ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας  
ἔπεμψεν φίλους ὁ  
ἑκατοντάρχης λέγων αὐτῷ,  
Κύριε, μὴ σκύλλου, οὐ γὰρ

ίκανός εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν  
στέγην μου εἰσέλθῃς.

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof."

A third example of this pattern occurs in a comparison of Matt 18:13 with Luke 15:6, where φίλος appears in Luke, but not in the parallel tradition:

Matt 18:12–13

[12] Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἐὰν γένηται  
τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἑκατὸν πρόβατα  
καὶ πλανηθῇ ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν,  
οὐχὶ ἀφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα  
ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη καὶ  
πορευθεὶς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανώμενον;  
[13] καὶ ἐὰν γένηται εὗρεῖν  
αὐτό, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι  
χαίρει ἐπ' αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ  
τοῖς ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα τοῖς  
μὴ πεπλανημένοις.

[12] "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? [13] And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

Luke 15:4–6

[4] Τίς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὑμῶν ἔχων  
ἑκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ ἀπολέσας ἐξ  
αὐτῶν ἓν οὐ καταλείπει τὰ  
ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ  
καὶ πορεύεται ἐπὶ τὸ ἀπολωλὸς  
ἕως εὗρῃ αὐτό; [5] καὶ εὗρων  
ἐπιτίθουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους αὐτοῦ  
χαίρων [6] καὶ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸν  
οἶκον συγκαλεῖ τοὺς φίλους καὶ  
τοὺς γείτονας λέγων αὐτοῖς,  
Συγχάρητέ μοι, ὅτι εὗρον τὸ  
πρόβατόν μου τὸ ἀπολωλός.

[4] "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? [5] And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders [6] and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

One could argue that just because φίλοι appears in Luke and not in Matthew when material is taken from Q, one does not necessarily know whether it is Lukan to incorporate the term into the material or Matthean

to subtract it from the tradition. However, when the word φίλοι occurs in Luke, even when Luke has used Markan material, it seems that the tendency is becoming apparent. Compare, for instance, Mark 13:12 and the parallel verse in Luke 21:16:

Mark 13:12

καὶ παραδώσει ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν  
εἰς θάνατον καὶ πατὴρ τέκνον,  
καὶ ἐπαναστήσονται τέκνα ἐπὶ  
γονεῖς καὶ θανατώσουσιν αὐτούς.

Brother will betray brother to  
death, and a father his child.  
Children will rebel against their  
parents and have them put to  
death.

Luke 21:16

παραδοθήσεσθε δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ  
γονέων καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ συγγενῶν  
καὶ φίλων, καὶ θανατώσουσιν  
ἐξ ὑμῶν.

You will be betrayed even by  
parents, brothers, relatives and  
friends, and they will put some  
of you to death.

In addition to all these examples there are nine other occurrences of the word φίλοι in the Gospel of Luke, frequently occurring with references to common meals, hospitality, or alliances. These instances appear in Luke 11:5, 6, 8; 14:10, 12; 15:9, 29; 16:9; and 23:12.

Considering the tendency just shown in the Gospel of Luke, one is not surprised that the book of Acts also maintains a higher incidence of φιλέω family words than ἀγαπάω ones. Although words from the ἀγαπάω family occur in every book of the New Testament for a total of 341 times, they appear only once in Acts. Acts 15:25 reads: ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ ("So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul").

Even though Acts contains no forms of ἀγάπη or ἀγαπάω, and only this one incidental reference to the "beloved" Paul, there are, on the other hand, three references to the word φίλοι, including:

Acts 10:24

τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν· ὁ δὲ Κορνήλιος  
ᾧ ἦν προσδοκῶν αὐτούς συγκαλεσάμενος τοὺς συγγενεῖς αὐτοῦ  
καὶ τοὺς ἀναγκαίους φίλους.

The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

Acts 19:31

τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἀσιαρχῶν, ὄντες αὐτῷ φίλοι, πέμψαντες πρὸς  
αὐτὸν παρεκάλουν μὴ δοῦναι ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸ θέατρον.

Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

Acts 27:3

τῇ τε ἐτέρᾳ κατήχθημεν εἰς Σιδῶνα, φιλανθρώπως τε ὁ Ἰούλιος τῷ Παύλῳ χρησάμενος ἐπέτρεψεν πρὸς τοὺς φίλους πορευθέντι ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν.

The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.

Comparing the vocabularies of Luke-Acts and the Pauline epistles reveals that the proportion of words belonging to the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω families stand in direct opposition to one another. Paul, for instance, never uses φίλος, but rather, when making salutations to other believers or when sending his closing greetings to acquaintances or loved ones, he gives them many different designations including “brother” or “sister” in Christ or “beloved” (ἀγαπητοί). He never uses any of the ample opportunities to mention any friends (φίλοι) in the frequent, long lists of names in the epistles. Significantly, however, the author of Luke-Acts does not strictly adhere to Paul’s vocabulary, portraying instead the apostle as the head of a circle of “friends” that gathered around him and provided for his needs.<sup>13</sup>

Luke’s is the only Gospel in which the frequency of the φιλέω family of words exceeds that of the ἀγαπάω word family. Part of the reason for this predominance is the high number of occasions in which the author of Luke-Acts employs the term φίλοι either as a designation for believers or as a more general term designating a close-knit circle. The fact that φίλοι operates as a designation for believers already in Luke 12:4 increases the likelihood that in Acts it may also function as a reference to fellow believers, especially in Acts 27:3. In either case, in the eighteen occurrences of φίλοι in Luke-Acts, the word clearly emerges as a significant term for this author.

The importance of the φιλέω family of words is not limited in the Christian communities to the author of Luke. For instance, the Bezae manuscript (D) appears to favor a slightly greater role for the φιλέω family than do other manuscripts of the same text. In a manner similar to the Lukan tendency in Acts, D places Paul in contact with a circle of φίλοι:

Acts 16:39

καὶ ἐλθόντες παρεκάλεσαν  
αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες

Acts 16:39 in Codex D

καὶ παραγενόμενοι μετὰ φίλων  
πολλῶν εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν

<sup>13</sup> Stählin, “φίλος,” 162. See also the reference to Wilhelm Michaelis, “Die ‘Gefreundeten’ des Apostels Paulus,” *Der Kirchenfreund* 67 (1933) 310–13, 328–34. To see this contrast more clearly, compare 2 Cor 11:9 and Phil 4:10, 16, and 18 in which Paul’s needs are taken care of by people referred to as ἀδελφοί and ἀγαπητοί in Phil 4:1, 8, 21, but never as φίλοι.

ἡρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως.

They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.

παρεκάλεσαν αὐτούς, ἐξελθεῖν εἰπόντες ἡγνοήσαμεν τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἐστέ ἄνδρες δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς λέγοντες ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης ἐξέλθατε μήποτε πάλιν συστραφῶσιν ἡμῖν ἐπικράζοντες καθ' ὑμῶν.

And having arrived with many friends at the prison, they besought them to go forth, saying “We did not know the truth about you, that you are righteous men.” And when they had brought them out they besought them saying, “Depart from this city, lest they again assemble against us, crying out against you.”

The tendency of the Bezae text to give a greater role to the φιλέω family appears at other places as well. For example, whereas John 11:5 states: ἠγάπα δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον (“Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus”), in Codex Bezae the ἀγαπάω verb form gives way to: ἐφίλει δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον.

## ■ Further Differences in Vocabulary Usage

Along with numerous instances of the appearance of φίλος or the φιλέω family of words in the Lukan special tradition, in Acts, and in Codex Bezae, the previous section has primarily noted the appearances of words from the φιλέω family in Luke, where none existed in the parallel materials in Matthew or Mark. In these cases the usage of φίλοι generally appeared in a positive way to describe either another believer or some other intimate. What becomes even more intriguing, however, is when the opposite dynamic occurs in Luke—when the material parallel to Luke contains a φιλέω word, but Luke does not. Interestingly, these are instances in which the parallel material is employing φιλέω in a negative or misdirected way. These instances lay the groundwork for a case that authors such as Luke maintained an appreciation for the φιλέω family of words.

In the examples below the author of Luke finds some other way to state the same material without using φιλέω negatively:

Matt 10:37–38

[37] Ὁ φιλῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα  
 ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος·  
 καὶ ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ  
 θυγατέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ  
 ἔστιν μου ἄξιος· [38] καὶ ὅς  
 οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν  
 αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ  
 ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου  
 ἄξιος.

Anyone who loves his father or  
 mother more than me is not  
 worthy of me; anyone who loves  
 his son or daughter more than me  
 is not worthy of me; and  
 anyone who does not take his  
 cross and follow me is not  
 worthy of me.

Luke 14:26

Εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με καὶ  
 οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ,  
 καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν  
 γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ  
 τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς  
 ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ,  
 οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.

If anyone comes to me and does  
 not hate his father and mother,  
 his wife and children, his brothers  
 and sisters—yes, even his own  
 life—he cannot be my disciple.

Another instance when Matthew uses φιλέω negatively, while the Lukan parallel does not, appears in their respective descriptions of the Pharisees. Whereas Matthew's work uses φιλέω in describing the Pharisees' misdirected love, the text of Luke-Acts again avoids using φιλέω to indicate love that is misdirected<sup>14</sup> and instead employs ἀγαπάω to denote flawed love. The choice of vocabulary in these two passages is mostly parallel, with the obvious exception of the words for love.

Matt 23:6–7

φιλοῦσιν δὲ τὴν πρωτοκλισίαν  
 ἐν τοῖς δείπνοις καὶ τὰς  
 πρωτοκαθεδρίας ἐν ταῖς  
 συναγωγαῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς  
 ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς. . . .

They [the Pharisees] love the place  
 of honor at banquets and the most  
 important seats in the synagogues;  
 they love to be greeted in the  
 marketplaces. . . .

Luke 11:43

οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς Φαρισαίοις, ὅτι  
ἀγαπᾶτε τὴν πρωτοκαθεδρίαν  
 ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ τοὺς  
 ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς.

Woe to you Pharisees, because  
 you love the most important seats  
 in the synagogues and greetings  
 in the marketplaces.

<sup>14</sup> Only once does Luke employ the word φιλέω in a negative context and that occurs in Luke 20:46 in a description of the scribes that closely parallels Markan wording.



Interestingly, the only time that Luke uses the substantive form, *ἀγάπη*, in either of the two volumes, it occurs in the context of a condemnation of the Pharisees:

Matt 23:23

Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ  
Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι  
ἀποδεκατοῦτε τὸ ἡδύοσμον καὶ  
τὸ ἄνθηθον καὶ τὸ κύμινον, καὶ  
ἀφήκατε τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ  
νόμου, τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος  
καὶ τὴν πίστιν· ταῦτα [δὲ] ἔδει  
ποιῆσαι κάκεῖνα μὴ ἀφιέναι.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law  
and Pharisees, you hypocrites!  
You give a tenth of your spices—  
mint, dill, and cummin. But you  
have neglected the more important  
matters of the law—justice, mercy,  
and faithfulness. You should have  
practiced the latter, without  
neglecting the former.

Luke 11:42

ἀλλὰ οὐὰ ὑμῖν τοῖς Φαρισαίοις,  
ὅτι ἀποδεκατοῦτε τὸ ἡδύοσμον  
καὶ τὸ πήγανον καὶ πᾶν  
λάχανον, καὶ παρέρχεσθε τὴν  
κρίσιν καὶ τὴν *ἀγάπην* τοῦ  
θεοῦ· ταῦτα δὲ ἔδει ποιῆσαι  
κάκεῖνα μὴ παρεῖναι.

“Woe to you Pharisees, because  
you give God a tenth of your  
mint, rue, and all other kinds of  
garden herbs, but you neglect  
justice and the *love* of God.  
You should have practiced the  
latter without leaving the former  
undone.

Again the western tradition exemplified by the Bezae text reflects the same practice of employing *ἀγαπάω* in a negative context to denote mis-directed or inadequate love:

Mark 7:6

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, καλῶς  
ἐπροφήτευσεν Ἰσάϊας περὶ ὑμῶν  
τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, ὡς γέγραπται  
[ὅτι] Οὗτος ὁ λαὸς τοῖς χεῖλεσίν  
με τιμᾷ, ἡ δὲ καρδία αὐτῶν  
πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ·

He replied, “Isaiah was right  
when he prophesied about you  
hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These  
people *honor* me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.’”

Mark 7:6 (D W a b c)

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, καλῶς  
ἐπροφήτευσεν Ἰσάϊας περὶ ὑμῶν  
τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, ὡς γέγραπται  
[ὅτι] Οὗτος ὁ λαὸς τοῖς χεῖλεσίν  
με *ἀγαπᾷ*, ἡ δὲ καρδία αὐτῶν  
πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ·

He replied, “Isaiah was right  
when he prophesied about you  
hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These  
people *love* me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.’”

## ■ φίλος in Noncanonical Texts

In addition to the Gospel of Luke, various noncanonical texts continue the pattern of using the φιλέω family words within their traditions. It is intriguing that many of these texts also have a special interest in the apostle Peter as an authority figure. Not only does the Gospel of Luke portray Peter in a particularly esteemed position,<sup>15</sup> but scholars such as Eldon Epp have found that Codex Bezae likewise “betrays an emphasis on the greater importance of Peter.”<sup>16</sup>

Other texts that feature both φιλέω vocabulary and an interest in Peter as an authority include the *Gospel of Peter*. In this very early Christian text, the use of φίλοι as a designation for Christians finds an echo in the portrayal of Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb on Easter morning bringing φίλας with her (λαβοῦσα μεθ’ ἐαυτῆς τὰς φίλας).<sup>17</sup> In the *Martyrdom of Peter*, Peter refers to Christ with several designations including

<sup>15</sup> Luke’s privileging of Peter is clear for a number of reasons especially considering the material that only Luke presents—the most significant of which is the fact that only this Gospel mentions Jesus making a resurrection appearance exclusively to Peter (Luke 24:34). Luke also offers a more developed account of Peter’s call (Luke 5:1–11), as well as Jesus’ special commissioning in which he promises to pray for Peter so that later Peter will strengthen the other brethren (Luke 22:32). Not only does the author add such material to Luke, but also removes or mitigates negative synoptic tradition concerning Peter. Significantly, Jesus does not rebuke Peter by referring to him as Satan in Luke as he does in Matthew and Mark (cf. Luke 9:22 with Mark 8:32–33 and Matt 16:22–23). In the Transfiguration, moreover, although Mark 9:6 states that Peter “did not know what to say,” Luke 9:33 rephrases it to say that he did not know what he had said. Although both Mark and Matthew portray Jesus as specifically rebuking Peter for sleeping at the garden, in Luke, Jesus merely addresses “them” (cf. Luke 22:45 with Mark 14:37 and Matt 26:40). Furthermore, in Luke Peter does not mistakenly deny that he will betray Jesus (cf. Luke 22:33–34 with Matt 26:33–35 and Mark 14:29–31). Nor is Peter portrayed as cursing or swearing during the denial in Luke as he is in the other two Synoptic Gospels (cf. Luke 22:60 with Mark 14:71 and Matt 26:74). Additional differences exist, some of which have been pointed out in Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973) 110–14, 127, as well as in the dissertation by Terence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1985) 160–61. See also Francois Bovon, *L’Evangile selon Saint Luc 1, 1–9, 50* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1991) 228.

<sup>16</sup> Eldon Jay Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 161. In the Cornelius incident of Acts 10:24b–25, the Bezae variant presents a particularly clear subordination of Cornelius to Peter. On the next page, Epp also cites Lagrange and Williams who have listed a number of Bezae variants displaying a special emphasis on Peter: Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Critique textuelle: La critique rationnelle* (Paris: Gabalda, 1935) 391, and Charles S. C. Williams, *Alterations to the Text of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951) 57. For more information on the theological tendencies of Codex Bezae, see also P. H. Menoud, “The Western Text and the Theology of Acts,” *SNTS Bull.* 2 (1951) 19–32.

<sup>17</sup> *Gos. Pet.* 12.51. Staḥn, “φίλος,” 115.

the phrase σὺ φίλος.<sup>18</sup> Another example is Joseph of Arimathea, only a disciple in Matt 27:57 and John 19:38, but in the *Gos. Pet.* 2.3 he is a φίλος or “friend” of Jesus, as well as of Pilate.

Additional evidence that points to a group or groups of Christians having an affinity for the φιλέω word family comes from the *Acts of Peter* in the climactic scene in which Peter makes his pivotal speech before Agrippa and a mass of people. The text states that Peter quieted the people and began to speak. At the beginning of the speech he addresses God as, “Oh grace ineffable,” and then says, “Oh love unspeakable and inseparable, that cannot be disclosed through unclean lips.” In the Greek version, Peter addresses God with the term “love” but uses the term φιλία instead of what became the more common Christian term: ἀγάπη.<sup>19</sup>

## ■ The Gospel of John

In contrast to Luke’s predilection for the φιλέω word family, the Gospel of John clearly prefers ἀγαπάω words, using them more than all three other Gospels combined (thirty-seven occurrences). Since, moreover, the authority figure for this Gospel is the “beloved disciple” (ὁν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς), it is clear that the ἀγαπάω word family holds the preferred position. There are, however, some exceptions to this usage that can be explained in at least two ways.

First, in the same way that Paul includes φιλέω vocabulary in 1 Cor 16:22 when passing on a received tradition,<sup>20</sup> so, too, does the author or redactor of John include φιλέω vocabulary that originates from tradition or source material. One example occurs in John 12:25, a saying that clearly did not originate from the Evangelist but must have come from some oral or written material since a variation also appears in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24; and Matt 16:25). In this saying Jesus teaches: ὁ φιλῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολλύει αὐτήν (“The one who loves his/her life will lose it”). The same holds true for the φιλέω vocabulary in John 5:20, a passage that Bultmann’s source-critical work shows to be derived from source material:<sup>21</sup> ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πάντα δείκνυσιν

<sup>18</sup> Located in the last section of the *Acts of Peter*, in *Martyrdom of Peter* 10 (ed. Leῶν Vouaux; Paris: Librairie Letouzey & Ane; 1922) 454.

<sup>19</sup> *Acts of Peter* 37.

<sup>20</sup> Since Paul himself states that Peter and James were his only apostolic contacts (Gal 1:18–19), it may be significant that the liturgical tradition that Paul transmitted in his epistle also contains φιλέω vocabulary, and incidentally it occurs in an epistle written to the Corinthians—a city that by Paul’s own admission encompassed factions that called upon authority figures other than Paul such as Cephas and Apollos (1 Cor 1:12).

<sup>21</sup> Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 253.

αὐτῷ ὃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ (“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does”). The majority of the remaining φιλέω vocabulary occurs in the discourse chapters, which are clearly replete with source material as well as later redactions. For instance, the φιλέω vocabulary in 16:27 is suspect, especially since 16:28 in all probability is source material.<sup>22</sup> The same goes for John 15:15 where it is clear that φίλος again functioned as a designation for believers, since Jesus refers to his disciples as φίλοι: ὑμᾶς δὲ εἵρηκα φίλους, ὅτι πάντα ὃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου ἐγνώρισα ὑμῖν. (“Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you”). This also belongs to discourse material in John and does not have the ring of the usual vocabulary of the Gospel’s author. Verse 13, for example, relays what was probably a current maxim (μεῖζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”), causing Bultmann to contend that “in that case it will have been the source that has suggested the wording, as v. 14 may well come from there.”<sup>23</sup> Except for the ἵνα clause in the second half of verse 16, the same may be said of verses 15 and 16 in which other φιλέω vocabulary occurs.

In addition to source material, the Gospel of John also includes φιλέω words in certain descriptions of people and groups, raising the possibility that in some cases the use of these words serves the Evangelist’s own purposes: the author may be accurately portraying vocabulary that certain people used, such as the Judeans, for example. In fact, John 11:36 specifically portrays the Judeans (Ἰουδαῖοι) using φιλέω vocabulary to describe Jesus’ love: ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Ἴδε πῶς ἐφίλει αὐτόν. (“Then the Judeans said, ‘See how he loved him!’”). Concomitantly, all the rest of the dialogue material using φιλέω stem words comes from the mouth of these Judeans. For instance, in John 11:3–5 when the sisters of Lazarus, inhabitants of Judea, are quoted in the text, they too use φιλέω language to describe Jesus’ love: ἀπέστειλαν οὖν αἱ ἀδελφαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσαι, Κύριε, ἵδε ὃν φιλεῖς ἀσθενεῖ (“So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick’”). Two verses later, however, the author specifically describes Jesus in terms of the other word for love: ἡγάπα δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον (“But Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus”). The Gospel of John, moreover, designates several people with the term φίλος: Lazarus and John the Baptist, both of whom have connections to Judea.<sup>24</sup> Lazarus resides

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 589 n. 4. He refers as well to Heinz Becker, *Die Reden des Johannes-Evangeliums und der Stil der gnostischen Offenbarungsrede* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1956) 105.

<sup>23</sup> Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 543.

<sup>24</sup> John 11:11 and 3:29, respectively. John 19:12 uses φίλος with reference to Pilate in a political relationship with the emperor. It is again the Ἰουδαῖοι who make the reference.

in Judea along with Mary and Martha, while John the Baptist localizes his ministry there on both sides of the Jordan. In fact, in the Gospel of John when John the Baptist moves north for the season he moves only as far as Aenon near Salim, which is still part of Judea.<sup>25</sup> John thus portrays John the Baptist using φιλέω language when describing himself as a φίλος of the bridegroom, perhaps representing vocabulary that his own circle used. (Significantly, John also portrays at least Andrew [if not Peter as well] as a disciple of John the Baptist before they both became followers of Jesus.<sup>26</sup>)

Finally, the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in the twenty-first chapter of John would make much more sense if φιλέω in this case is not a designation for a secondary kind of love as some scholars have suggested,<sup>27</sup> but is instead a word that a certain community (represented by Peter in chapter 21) holds in high esteem. From the way Peter claims to love (φιλέω) Jesus and even repeats the verb twice, one could get the impression that the character Peter even prefers the word over ἀγαπάω.

John 21:15–17

[15] Ὅτε οὖν ἡρίστησαν λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με πλέον τούτων; λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναί κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Βόσκε τὰ ἀρνία μου.

[16] λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεύτερον, Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου. [17] λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, Σίμων Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, Φιλεῖς με; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, πάντα σὺ οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ Ἰησοῦς], Βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου.

<sup>25</sup> John 3:23.

<sup>26</sup> On only one occasion in John is a disciple described with the phrase ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς (John 20:2). In my opinion, there is no convincing reason to assume that this “other” disciple is identical with the beloved disciple ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς. In fact, there is good reason mitigating against that interpretation. Since the whole point of the Gospel is to bless those who believe without seeing in the conclusion of John (20:29), surely the authority figure of this Gospel would not need to run to the tomb to verify the news. Especially since the text in 20:8 specifically states that at the tomb this “other” disciple “saw” and then “believed” (ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ...εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν). Such a statement places this “other” disciple in the same category as doubting Thomas who also needed to see to believe.

<sup>27</sup> Raymond Brown (*The Gospel According to John* [2 vols.; New York: Anchor Bible, 1966] 1. 497–99) summarizes well the ways in which scholars have distinguished between these two verbs, frequently importing a certain superiority to ἀγαπᾶν. Brooke Foss Wescott (*The Gospel According to St. John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954] 303), for instance, states that Peter responds with φιλεῖν because “he does not venture to say that he has attained to that higher love (ἀγαπᾶν).” Likewise, T.E. Evans (“The Verb ‘agapan’ in the Fourth Gospel,” *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F.L. Cross [London: Mowbray, 1957] 64–71) contends that Peter’s humility keeps him from using ἀγαπᾶν. Other texts that imply different estimations of the two verbs are: K. L. McKay, “Style and Significance in the Language of John 21:15–17,” *NovT* 27 (1985) 319–33; and Ceslas Spicq, *Agape in the New Testament* (3 vols.; St. Louis: Herder, 1963) 1. 141.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

One could attempt to explain the unusual alternation between ἀγαπάω and φιλέω words by saying that there are no nuances between the meanings of the two words—that the author of this chapter is merely attempting to add variety to the vocabulary. In a Gospel, however, that uses only half as many words as appear in even the limited vocabulary of the Gospel of Mark, it seems unlikely that Johannine vocabulary would suddenly become so profligate with synonyms. Ceslas Spicq contends, “Commentators are divided about the respective value of the two verbs, but those who make them synonymous either ignore the semantics of agape or minimize the importance of the scene.”<sup>28</sup>

Another response to this vocabulary conundrum has been to investigate classical texts in order to distinguish the differences between words.<sup>29</sup> In this effort, some scholars have stressed so highly the importance of ἀγαπάω as a self-giving love—as the highest possible achievement—that by comparison the verb φιλέω has paled beside it. As a result of the portrayal of such a contrast, it would be easy to overlook the significance of the φιλέω verb family with respect to the linguistic context in which the early Christians lived. A more balanced approach might be more helpful.

Finally, if indeed chapter 21 is a conciliatory appendix, one that is adapting to a Panchristianity, the conversation makes more sense if Peter is not advocating a less significant word for love but is representative of a community that used φιλέω in its language of worship, much as did the community that 1 Cor 16:22 represents. Placing φιλέω vocabulary on the lips of Jesus in dialogue with Peter is thus one way to acknowledge the legitimacy of that vocabulary alongside that deriving from other sources, such as Pauline and/or Septuagintal language.

<sup>28</sup> Ceslas Spicq, *Agape in the New Testament*, 3. 95; also quoted in Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2. 1103.

<sup>29</sup> Stauffer, “ἀγαπάω,” 35–38; Stählin, “φιλέω,” 114–24; Spicq, “ἀγάπη,” 8–22.

## ■ Conclusion

This article has shown examples in which a significant usage of φίλοι- and φιλέω-related words appear in certain strands of early Christianity (especially for the author of Luke). There is a possibility that certain vocabulary such as φιλέω and ἀγαπάω (like the particular designations for disciples) are representative of different Christian communities, such as Petrine, Pauline, or early Johannine ones. If so, then, John 21 may be an adaptation by a later Johannine community showing efforts to be more inclusive and Panchristian not only in its theology but also in its vocabulary. At the very least, I have shown that φιλέω may not deserve to be in quite such a diminished position when compared to ἀγαπάω. Some early Christians may have even had a greater appreciation for the use of the φίλοι- and φιλέω- related words than has previously been considered.

# “No Rhyme or Reason”: The Hidden Logia of the *Gospel of Thomas*

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Nonsense and faith (strange as the conjunction may seem) are the two supreme symbolic assertions of the truth that to draw out the soul of things with a syllogism is as impossible as to draw out Leviathan with a hook.

— G. K. Chesterton

Professor Helmut Koester has offered this incisive criticism and insightful characterization of research on the sayings traditions of the *Gospel of Thomas*:

What is most puzzling about the composition of sayings in this wisdom book is the arrangement and order of the sayings. There is seemingly no rhyme or reason for the odd sequence in which the sayings occur in the *Gospel of Thomas*. . . . several attempts have been made to find the author's compositional principle, none of them convincing.<sup>1</sup>

What follows is yet another attempt to “find the author's compositional principle,” in the hope that what I offer here will not earn a critique from Helmut Koester similar to those given to the efforts of my predecessors. Yet before turning to *Thomas*, which opens by claiming that whoever understands the interpretation of its sayings will not taste death, it is the interpretation of this logion of Helmut Koester's that promises, if not eternal life, at

<sup>1</sup> Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1990) 81.



least insightful exegesis. He rightly calls *Thomas* a “wisdom book”: as such, it exhibits the conflation, concatenation, and even contradiction that characterize wisdom literature not as a genre but as its own kind of discourse. In a brief review of the language of the text of *Thomas*, I hope to show that as a wisdom book it presents characteristic devices of composition: matching catchphrases, lexical and conceptual linking of sayings and sequences of sayings, the eclectic inclusion of earlier sayings collections, and the intercalation of sayings as a way of offering implicit intratextual commentary.<sup>2</sup> *Thomas* does what any other piece of wisdom literature seeks to do: it discursively lines out the logos hidden in the chaos that constitutes life, “the soul of things,” as Chesterton put it. Wisdom knows that the music of the spheres is cacophonous; the wisdom book accordingly seeks to score the theme of this music in a way that is true to its discordance and atonality, while at the same time presenting its movements, rhythm, and tempo in the bars and measures of aphorisms and sententiae. Koester’s logion suggests that the music that *Thomas* lines out is marked by the atonality and discordance typical of a sapiential score. One may yet discern the theme, as Helmut Koester has taught so many so well, by a close, careful reading of the book’s sapiential score. It is precisely such “a careful assessment of the entire document in its own right . . . based on a knowledge of the Coptic text and the Greek fragments,” that Ron Cameron, one of Koester’s distinguished former students, has prescribed for future scholarship treating the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>3</sup> What follows, in an abridged commentary, is a small contribution to such careful assessment of the text, a few preliminary notes on the score.

## ■ Commentary

*Gospel of Thomas* logia 1 and 2 are linked by the verb “find,” though the verb is rendered differently. In logion 1 it is translated by ⲩⲉⲉ, in logion 2 by Ⲓⲓⲛⲉ. The Oxyrhynchus papyri suggest, nevertheless, that the Greek *Vorlage* had the same verb (εὕρισκω) in both sayings. What was a lexical link in the Greek has become merely a pair of synonyms in Coptic. Although the linkage between logia 1 and 2 is no longer visible in Coptic *Thomas*, the connection between logia 2 and 3 is apparent only in Coptic, for both share the Coptic verbal construction of the first future with the shortened form of the verb ⲉⲓⲣⲉ, “to do.” This appears twice in logion 2, with “he shall marvel” (ϥⲛⲣ ⲩⲡⲛⲣⲉ) and “he shall rule” (ϥⲛⲁⲣ

<sup>2</sup> See Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (rev. Heinrich Greeven; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> In Francis Fallon and Ron Cameron, “The Gospel of Thomas: A *Forschungsbericht* and Analysis,” *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984) 4237.

ppo), and in logion 3 as “shall be first” (καρ̄ ψορπ). The lexical linkages within logia 4 through 6, constituted by the verb ορωη (‘‘reveal’’) in logia 5 and 6, suggests that ϣηαωη (‘‘shall live’’) in logion 4 be emended to read ϣηαορωη (‘‘shall be revealed’’). The first sentence of logion 4 is conventionally translated: ‘‘Jesus said, ‘The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life (πτοποσ ρ̄ πωηη) and he will live (ϣηαωη).’’<sup>4</sup> In the text as it stands, the verb ‘‘live’’ (ωηη) is the dittographic after-image of the preceding ‘‘place of life’’ (πτοποσ ρ̄ πωηη). Therefore, one may translate the first sentence of logion 4 as, ‘‘The person old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and *it* [that is, the place of life] *shall be revealed*.’’ This conjectural emendation finds support in the parallel saying quoted by Hippolytus, who attributes to a text he calls ‘‘the Gospel of Thomas’’ the saying, ‘‘One who seeks will find me in children from seven years, for there, hidden in the fourteenth age, *I am revealed*.’’<sup>5</sup> The verb ‘‘reveal’’ is the *Stichwort* that connects logion 4 with logion 5 and the second part of logion 6.

Logia 1 through 10 thus constitute an uninterrupted chain of dominical sayings in lexically linked sequence. If one reckons the introductory formula ‘‘Jesus said’’ (πεζε ις̄ ζε) as the marker initiating each saying, then one must count together some logia conventionally enumerated separately. Logion 11 begins a dominical dialogue that continues in logion 12, and so I count them as one dialogical logion. Logion 11 exhibits no discernible association with what has come before. It differs, however, from its parallel in Luke 12:49. Where Luke has the word ‘‘earth’’ (καη; γη), Thomas has ‘‘world’’ (κοσμοσ; κόσμος). *Thomas* modifies this saying again in logion 16 by substituting ‘‘world’’ for the Lukan term ‘‘earth.’’ In the next sentence, however, *Thomas* elaborates on the saying by using ‘‘earth’’ as a gloss on the term ‘‘world.’’ This suggests that in the lexicon of Thomas ‘‘world’’ is synonymous with ‘‘earth.’’ If this is so, then the ‘‘world’’ of logion 10 is synonymously linked to the phrase ‘‘heaven and earth’’ (τπε ρ̄ν̄ πκαη) at the end of what is conventionally counted as logion 12, thus connecting logion 10 with the dialogical logion 11/12. In similar fashion, logia 17 and 18 count as a single dialogical logion, with the verb ‘‘come’’ (ει) in logion 16 linking with the same verb in logion 17, and the adjective ‘‘blessed’’ (μακαριοσ) in logion 18 matching the same

<sup>4</sup> Here and elsewhere, unless specifically stated otherwise, I refer to the translation of Thomas Lambdin in Bentley Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex 2*. 2–7 together with 13. 2\*, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926 (1), and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655 (Nag Hammadi Studies 20; 2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 1. 53–93.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus *Ref.* 5.7.20. Cited in Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Gospel of Thomas* (trans. Harold Bloom; San Francisco: Harper, 1992) 70. My emphasis.

word in logion 19. Indeed in several instances *Thomas* has fashioned a dialogue from sayings that scholars typically count separately. This is so for logia 23 and 24, 36 and 37, 42 and 43, 50 through 53, 90 and 91, 92 and 93, 98 through 101, 103 and 104, and 112 through 114.

Logia 23 and 24 stand as a single, dominical dialogue. The text of the dialogue is patient of, if not improved by, the following emendation. First, one must read the verb in the opening clause of logion 23 not as “I shall choose” (†**ⲛⲁⲥⲉⲧⲡ**) but, reading the effaced third letter in the verb as a *lauda* instead of a *pi*, “I shall separate” (†**ⲛⲁⲥⲉⲗⲡ**). The sentence thus says, “I shall separate you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand, and they will stand as a single one.” The disciples then demand, “Show us the place where you are, for we must seek it.” The request as it stands is a non sequitur. I suggest that the phrase “the place where you are” (**ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲕⲙⲙⲁⲩ**) is a corruption of “that kind” (**ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ**), referring to the mysterious “single one” mentioned in the preceding sentence. The Greek loanword **ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ** (“place”; Greek: τόπος) is a misreading of **ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ** (“kind, type”; Greek: τύπος), and the adverbial relative clause modifying the noun likewise became misconstrued in the history of Coptic transmission. It is this “type” (**ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ**; τύπος) of solitary paragon that the disciples seek to imitate. Such a person, says Jesus, is “a person of light.” The word “light” (**ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲓⲛ**), which in Coptic also signifies eyesight, connects the end of this logion conceptually with the following sayings about the eye and seeing in logia 25, 26, and 27.

One may, in short, recuperate with some certainty the lexical and conceptual connections between the otherwise bewildering variety of sayings in *Thomas* logia 1 through 29. Here I translate the glosses so as to make the lexical relations clear.

Incipit: **ⲛⲩⲱⲁⲩⲉ** (“sayings”)

1. **ⲛⲉⲓⲱⲁⲩⲉ** (“these sayings”)

**ⲩⲉ ⲉ** (“find”)

2. **ⲉⲓⲛⲉ** [= **ⲩⲉ ⲉ**] (“find”)

**ⲩⲛⲣ̅ ⲩⲡⲛⲣⲉ**, lit. (“become amazed”)

**ⲩⲛⲁⲣ̅ ⲣⲣⲟ**, lit. (“become a ruler”)

3. **ⲛⲁⲣ̅ ⲩⲟⲣⲡ**, lit. (“become first”)

**ⲛⲩⲛⲣⲉ** (“children”)

4. **ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̅ ⲩⲛⲣⲉ** (“a small child”)

**ⲟⲩⲱⲛⲩ**<sup>6</sup> (“become manifest”)

5. **ⲟⲩⲱⲛⲩ** (“become manifest”)

<sup>6</sup> My emendation.



28. **ΚΟС ΜΟС** ("world")

**ϸⲁⲣⲉ** ("flesh")

29. **ϸⲁⲣⲉ** ("flesh")

Text critics as well as exegetes, however, have thrown up their hands at logion 30, which brings all rhyme or reason to an inscrutable halt. I am convinced that the only solution here is the Oxyrhynchus 1 parallel brilliantly restored by Harold Attridge.<sup>8</sup> Based on Attridge's restoration, the first line of the Greek has an "if" (εἰ). Translated into Coptic, the "if" would no doubt be **ϩⲏⲩⲁ**, which does occur in logion 29. Logia 29 and 30 may have been tied together originally by "if," but logion 30 became so hopelessly corrupt in the transmission history of the Coptic that the very word that originally linked the two logia vanished completely.

Logion 30, apparently a badly scrambled parallel of Matt 18:19–20, stands at the head of a string of sayings, logia 30 through 41, all of which have parallels in the Synoptic tradition. More specifically, all of these sayings have a Matthean version; logion 30 and logion 39b possessing parallels only in Matthew.<sup>9</sup> Here perhaps one may discern a separate source. At a subsequent redactional stage this collection became attached to what are now the first twenty-nine logia of *Thomas*. Its placement as a block of sayings was determined by a now lost lexical link—the big "if" that I suggested earlier. This block of sayings, however, is not without its own peculiar developments. Logion 33 is a playful instance of such development. The standard rendering of this logion, however, has obscured the interpolation, and so the invention of Coptic redaction here. Paralleled in Matt 10:27, Luke 12:3, *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus* 1.41–42, and in Clement of Alexandria's *Miscellanies* 6.15.124.5–6, the Coptic text here has:

**ⲡⲉⲧⲕⲏⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙⲉⲣⲟϥⲉⲩⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉⲩⲙⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁ**

**ⲁⲩⲉⲧⲁⲩⲱⲉⲟⲩⲱⲙⲙⲟϥⲉⲩⲙⲡⲉⲧⲕⲏⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙⲉⲣⲟϥ**

This is then edited from continuous script as,

**ⲡⲉⲧⲕⲏⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙⲉⲣⲟϥⲉⲩⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉⲩⲙⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁ**

**ⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉⲧⲁⲩⲱⲉⲟⲩⲱⲙⲙⲟϥⲉⲩⲙⲡⲉⲧⲕⲏⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙⲉⲣⲟϥ**

**ⲡⲉⲧⲕⲏⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙⲉⲣⲟϥⲉⲩⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉⲩⲙⲡⲕⲉⲙⲁ**

<sup>8</sup> Harold W. Attridge, "The Original Text of *Gos. Thom.*, Saying 30," *BASP* (1979) 153–57, esp. 157.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 157. (*Gos. Thom.* 30 // Matt 18:19–20; *Gos. Thom.* 39b// Matt 23:13).

Consequently, it may be translated as, “what you hear in your ear, in the other ear proclaim it from your roofs.” This rendering so frustrates all exegetical ingenuity, not to mention flying in the face of the realities of the human sensorium, that it must be wrong. The continuous script must be divided as follows:

ΠΕΤΚΝΔCΩΤ̄Μ ΕΡΟΥ ρ̄Μ ΠΕΚΜΔΔΔΕ, ρ̄Μ

ΠΕΚΜΔ ΔΔΕ. ΤΔΨΕ ΟΕΙΨ̄ ΜΜΟΥ ρ̄ΙΔ̄Ν

ΝΕΤ̄ΝΔΕΝΕΠΩΡ.

The translation of which is: “What you hear in your ear, in another place (ΠΕΚΜΔ) speak (ΔΔΕ). Proclaim it on your roofs.” ρ̄Ν ΠΕΚΜΔ ΔΔΕ (“in another place, speak”) mimics the phrase ΠΕΚΜΔΔΔΕ (“your ear”) that precedes it. This precedes another play on the word ΜΔΔΔΕ, which in Coptic means “ear,” “handle” of a jar or basket, or a unit of dry measure. The redactor appends to this saying the dominical logion about lighting a lamp and placing it under a bushel basket (see Matt 5:15; Luke 11:33; Mark 4:21; and Luke 8:16), that is, under a ΜΔΔΔΕ. The redactor is compiling sayings here with a peculiarly Coptic cleverness.

This effort to tickle the ear of the reader suggests that the catena has undergone distinctly Coptic redaction. The work of the Coptic redactor may also be discerned in the lexical linkages between logia 35, 36, and 37. Both logia 35 and 36 begin with the phrase “Jesus said,” followed by the negation particle ΜΝ. The presence of ΜΝ in logion 36 is all the more remarkable because there it negates an imperative verb; Sahidic requires ΜΠΡ for negation of the imperative, and imperative verbs are regularly negated by ΜΝ only in Achmimic.<sup>10</sup> Logia 37 and 38 have in common the word ρ̄ΟΟϠ (“day”) used in an interrogative phrase (ΔΨ̄ Ν̄ρ̄ΟΟϠ, “when”; lit., “what day”) in the former, and in the indefinite plural (ρ̄Ν̄ρ̄ΟΟϠ, “days”) in the latter. Although this Coptic redactional activity no doubt fundamentally changed the articulation and spin of the sayings that it has concatenated in this catena, there are nevertheless hints of an antecedent Greek version. In logion 38, Jesus tells his disciples that they have often wished (̄Ρ̄ ΕΠΙΘ̄Τ̄ΜΕΙ; Greek: ἐπιθυμέω) to hear his sayings, and in logion 39 he criticizes the Pharisees and scribes for barring those who wish (Ο̄ϠΩΨ̄) to enter into knowledge. Presumably the Greek ἐπιθυμέω is behind both the Greek loanword ̄Ρ̄ ΕΠΙΘ̄Τ̄ΜΕΙ in logion 38 and the autochthonous Coptic Ο̄ϠΩΨ̄ of logion 39. These threads of *Stichwörter* thus hold part of the text together.

<sup>10</sup> Walter C. Till, *Koptische Dialektgrammatik* (Munich: Beck, 1961) 52 (§244).

35.  $\overline{\text{ΜΝ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΓΟΜ}}$  ("it is not [ $\overline{\text{ΜΝ}}$ ] possible")  
 36.  $\overline{\text{ΜΝ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΥΙ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΡΟΟ}}$   $\overline{\text{Υ}}$  ("do not [ $\overline{\text{ΜΝ}}$ ] be concerned")  
 37.  $\overline{\text{Ϛ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΟΟ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ϙ}}$  ("day")  
 38.  $\overline{\text{Ϛ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΟΟ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ϙ}}$  ("day")  
 $\overline{\text{ΑΤΕΤΗΡΕΠΙΘ}}$   $\overline{\text{ΜΕΙ}}$  [=  $\overline{\text{ΟΥ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ω}}$ ] ("you have wished")  
 39.  $\overline{\text{ΝΕΤΟ}}$   $\overline{\text{Υ}}$  ("those who wish")

At first sight, logion 37 seems to constitute an exception within the block of sayings in which it appears, in that this particular collection of sayings is frequently defined by the Matthean parallels. Indeed logion 37 has no parallel in the triple tradition. It is not introduced by the formula,  $\overline{\text{ΠΕ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ξ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ε}}$   $\overline{\text{Ι}}$   $\overline{\text{C}}$   $\overline{\text{Ξ}}$   $\overline{\text{Ε}}$ , "Jesus said": It is not formally a separate logion, but a continuation of the dialogue initiated in logion 36. Thus logia 36 and 37 are to be read as a single dialogical logion. Together they form a unit of speech that does begin with a saying paralleled in Matthew, as do the other logia of this catena. What has been conventionally enumerated as logion 36 is roughly parallel to Matt 6:25 and Luke 12:22. To this first saying, the redactor has appended logion 37 because it both continues and qualifies the treatment of the subject of clothing, the problem of getting clothing in logion 36, and the problem of getting rid of it in logion 37. Clothing apparently has pejorative connotations for the redactor. He modifies the dominical counsel not to worry about acquiring garments, suggesting, not that the disciples conquer their fear of nakedness, but that only in nakedness may they conquer their fear. Shameless nakedness, however one interprets it, is a desideratum for the redactor, who therefore looks askance at anxiety over sartorial splendor. For the redactor, the logion as it appears in the Synoptic tradition is superfluous counsel: he therefore joins with it the caveat now conventionally counted as logion 37. The intelligence behind this redaction, as Koester has rightly observed, is "not an author who deliberately composed his book according to a general master plan," but "rather a collector and compiler."<sup>11</sup> Apparently, however, this "collector and compiler" has his own predilections, including nudity and occasional corniness, that find expression in the way he has arranged and emended the materials of logia 30 through 41.

Logia 42 and 43 comprise yet another dialogue. The identification of this compound logion as a dialogue, however, has exegetical consequences, as becomes clear when one attends to the language of the text. Logion 42 is commonly translated as "be passersby," or "become passersby." The

<sup>11</sup> Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 83.

conventional interpretation of this logion suggests the world-weary counsel of Yeats to “Cast a cold eye / On life, on death / Horseman, pass by.” The verb form, however, is not substantivized, as the English translation suggests by the noun “passersby.” The verbal structure of the clause, the imperative of the verb “to become” with the circumstantial, signifies an imperative with a durative sense, and is used to command or proscribe a practice or state of being.<sup>12</sup> The literal translation of the clause is, therefore, “be passing by,” that is, “move along.” The intended sense is dismissive: Jesus is telling his disciples to move along, to “get lost.” Logion 43 is their response to Jesus’ rebuff: “Who are you to say these things to us?” The interrogative here indicates the disciples’ indignation. One may observe the same rhetorical device in logion 61, itself a dialogue comprised of shorter logia. The logion opens with the dominical saying, “Two will rest on a couch; one will die, the other will live.” Here, Jesus’ interlocutor is Salome, who retorts, “Who are you, man? As a stranger you sat on my couch and ate from my table.”<sup>13</sup> Salome is annoyed presumably because she has sat on the couch with Jesus, and the unfortunate pair Jesus mentions in his saying suggests that one of the two of them, Jesus or Salome, will die—hardly happy dinner conversation. Logia 42 and 43 as well as logion 61 suggest the rude Jesus of the Synoptic tradition, a tough talker who engages in name-calling,<sup>14</sup> race-baiting,<sup>15</sup> and insulting his hosts at table.<sup>16</sup>

Logia 42 and 43 introduce another motley collection of controversy sayings, logia 42 through 47. A common concern of these sayings is the opposition to the new dispensation by the old, and they continue the theme of the opposition of dispensations implicit in logia 30 through 41. Logia 42–47 begin with a polemic against the Jews and end with a compound logion that combines sayings about old wine in new wineskins and an old patch on a new garment. The guiding principle of this catena is thus thematic, juxtaposing materials treating the conflict of dead tradition and living revelation.

<sup>12</sup> On this syntactical construction, see Ariel Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Chrestomathy* (Leuven: Peeters, 1988) 117. Shisha-Halevy calls this construction “a verb of incomplete predication . . . expanded by the circumstantial” with the verb  $\Psi\Omega\pi\epsilon$ , and adduces fifteen sentences as examples from Sahidic Coptic literature. Shisha-Halevy’s sentence no. 4 is syntactically identical to that of *Thomas* logion 42:  $\Psi\Omega\pi\epsilon \epsilon\tau\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\tau}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu} \epsilon \pi\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ , “Be like God.”

<sup>13</sup> The translation here is based on Hans Jakob Polotsky’s ingenious emendation. See Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex*, 2.2–7. 74.

<sup>14</sup> Matt 23:1–36.

<sup>15</sup> Matt 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 7:36–47.



Logion 47 begins with sayings about one being better than two, and logion 48 follows with similar vocabulary about two being like one. The "solitary one" of logion 49 is synonymous with the "single one" of logion 48, and lexical linkages run through the concluding saying of the controversy catena, logion 47, through logia 48 and 49 treating singleness of purpose, and to the extended dialogue comprised of logia 50 through 53, which engages with hostility the issues of Israelite faith and practice.

47. **СНАѲ . . . ПОѲΔ** ("two . . . the one")  
 48. **ΕΡΨΔСНАѲ . . . ОѲΩΤ** ("if two . . . one")  
 49. **ΜΟΝΔΧΟС** [= **ΟѲΩΤ**] ("a solitary one")  
     **ΝΤΩΤΗΝ 2Ν ΕΒΟΛ** ("you are from")  
 50. **ΝΤΔΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ** ("we came from")  
     **ΔΝΔΠΑѲСΙС** ("rest")  
 51. **ΔΝΔΠΑѲСΙС** ("rest")  
     **ΝΕΤΜΟΟѲΤ** ("the dead")  
 52. **ΝΕΤΜΟΟѲΤ** ("the dead")  
     **ΜΠροΦΗΤΗΣ . . . ΠΙСΡΔΗΔ** ("the prophets . . . Israel")  
 53. **ΠСΒΒΕ** ("circumcision")  
     **ΠΟѲΕΙΩΤ . . . ΤΟѲΜΔΔѲ** ("their father . . . their mother")  
 54. (?)  
 55. **ΠΕѲΕΙΩΤ, ΤΕѲΜΔΔѲ** ("his father . . . his mother")

Both logion 53 and 55 are sayings about parents but are separated by the incongruous logion 54, a version of Q's famous beatitude of God's preferential option for the poor. The redactor has interrupted the lexical flow of the sayings collection, using logion 54 to qualify the logion that preceded it. He does so because of the concluding sentence of logion 53: "The true circumcision of the spirit has been entirely profitable." The phrase "to be profitable" (**ΓΙΝΕ 2ΗѲ**) is an idiom rare in Sahidic,<sup>17</sup> and because of its financial connotations may even suggest that the profit of the "spiritual circumcision" is pecuniary. The suggestion of mercantile benefit is an interpretation that is anathema to the redactor. The *Gospel of Thomas* is hostile toward merchants, as the peculiar punchline of logion 64 makes explicit: "Buyers and merchants do not enter the places of my Father." Logion 54 is, therefore, an interpolation between logia 53 and 55 and is intended to preclude a mercantile interpretation of logion 53.

After the string of renuncatory sayings in logia 52 through 56, the redactor breaks the chain of linking words again in logion 57, which reminds the reader that the dead body of the world is to be disdained but not

<sup>17</sup> See Walter E. Crum, "**2ΗѲ**," *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 729b.

destroyed. Imperfections tolerated now will be remedied only “on the day of the harvest” — a counsel which serves in *Thomas* as a kind of eschatological reservation without the eschatology. Perhaps logion 57 suggests limits on antisocial behavior, or anarchism, or askesis. The last mentioned is most likely, I think, because logia 59, 60, and 61 have to do with living fully and eating well. The connection of logia 58 through 62 must remain uncertain because of the minor lacunae in logion 60 and the major lacuna of logion 62. Logia 63, 64, and 65 are short stories about “a man,” variously described. Logion 66 has no lexical or topical link with what preceded it, and thus ostensibly breaks the chain of verbal connections. Under more careful scrutiny, however, the reason for the placement of logion 66 becomes clear: in the triple tradition the saying paralleled in logion 66, that is, about the stone that the builders rejected, directly follows the parable of the vineyard paralleled in logion 65.<sup>18</sup> These two logia thus cohere neither lexically nor topically, but had terms linked in the Jesus tradition. Logion 67, meanwhile, shares with logion 65 the word “place” (ⲙⲁ) and the lexical linkages between the sayings continue uninterrupted to logion 70. This logion follows on the heels of logion 69 because the latter refers to the “stomach” (ⲓⲛ) which in Coptic may also be translated as “womb.” Logion 70, speaking of “that within you,” suggests that one is to understand the “stomach” mentioned above as the interior life, and not the alimentary canal. The redactor invalidates the carnal interpretation of 69, which he finds inadequate or offensive, by placing logion 70 immediately after it. Just as with the hermeneutically motivated interpolation of logion 54, logion 70 serves to preempt an undesirable interpretation.

Following the trail of *Stichwörter* requires more ingenuity as one approaches the end of *Thomas*. The “solitary one” (ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ) of logion 75 is related to the single pearl (ⲙⲁⲣⲥⲁⲣⲓⲧⲏⲥ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ) of logion 76; ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ and ⲟⲩⲱⲧ are synonymous here, as they are in logia 48 and 49. Sayings 79 through 81 share the grammatical construction of a substantivized relative clause in the perfect tense: ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ (“those who have heard”) in logion 79, ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲟⲩⲱⲛ (“the one who has understood”) in logion 80, and ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲟ (“the one who has become wealthy”) in logion 81. An invariable *hori* (ⲓ) substitutes for the pronominal marker of the verbal conjugation. This sub-Achmimic feature in the Sahidic dialect of *Thomas* apparently guided the placement of these logia at the Coptic stage of redaction. This sub-Achmimicism appears again in logion 89, which renders the same substantivized relative clause in the perfect (“the one who made”) as both ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ⲓⲟ and ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ⲓⲟ in the same sentence and with the same referent. All of this suggests that one has to do

<sup>18</sup> See Matt 21:33–41 and 21:42; Mark 12:1–9 and 12:10; Luke 20:9–16 and 20:17.

here not with a sub-Achmimic recension as such, but with a scribe or scribal tradition that writes Sahidic Coptic with a strong sub-Achmimic accent.

The relation of logia 82 through 88 resists easy analysis. Logia 83, 84, and 85 suggest the language of Genesis 1: the words “image” (ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ), “likeness” (ϵⲓⲛϵ), “man” (ⲡⲱⲙϵ), and “Adam” (ⲁⲃⲁⲙ) recall the creation of the world and of humankind. From this point on, however, the text becomes physically as well as hermeneutically problematic. Several lacunae and effaced letters mar logia 85 and 86. Although standard restorations are widely accepted, they are not beyond question. The first sentence of logion 85 is usually rendered, “Jesus said, ‘Adam came from a great power and great wealth, but he was not worthy of you.’” There is, however, no reference to anyone in the second person plural, either in the logion or in any of the logia that immediately precede it. The pronoun “you” here presumably refers to the disciples, the implied readers, or both. This sentence makes more sense, however, if the concluding prepositional phrase “of you” (ⲙⲙⲱⲧⲛ) is read as ⲙⲙⲱⲧⲛ (“to be at rest”) and so the sentence reads, “Adam came from a great power and was not worthy to be at rest.” The word “rest” serves therefore, as the lexical link between this logion and the one following it, which declares that “the Son of Man has no place to lay his head and rest.” In this saying, otherwise known through Q 9:58 (Matt 8:20), the phrase “and rest” (ⲛϥⲙⲱⲧⲛ) is unique to *Thomas*. This redactional flourish indirectly strengthens the case for the conjectural emendation that I have proposed for logion 85, an emendation which, in turn, discloses the verbal connection between two sayings.

A slightly more corrupt text mars the medium and the message of logion 87. The logion begins with a variation on the formula, “Jesus said”: not ⲡⲉⲃⲉⲓⲥ ⲃⲉ, but ⲡⲉⲃⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲓⲓⲥ ⲃⲉ. Perhaps this is a sign in the text that the exegete is to proceed with caution. The unusual introductory formula precedes the saying, “Wretched is the body that depends on a body, and wretched is the soul that depends on both.” I propose to emend the phrase, ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲁⲱⲉ ⲛⲱⲟⲩⲥⲱⲙⲁ (“the body that depends on a body”) to ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲁⲱⲉ ⲛⲥⲁⲟⲩⲙⲁ (“the body that hangs upon a place.”) The entire logion would then read: “Wretched is the body that hangs upon a place, and wretched is the soul that hangs upon (or “depends upon”; note the possible double entendre) both.” The “both” of the latter clause of the sentence refers to “the body” and “a place” (ⲙⲁ) from which it hangs, presumably a reference to the cross. If this text had a Greek *Vorlage* for which Coptic ⲙⲁ translates the Greek τόπος, a retroversion of the sentence in Greek would read, “Wretched is the body that hangs from a place, and wretched is the soul that depends upon both.” It is easy to see how ⲛⲥⲁⲟⲩⲙⲁ was misread or otherwise misunderstood as ⲛⲥⲱⲙⲁ. More important, the emendation recognizes ⲟⲩⲙⲁ as the *Stichwort* shared by

logion 86 (“The son of man has no place [ⲙⲁ]”) and 87, (“Wretched is the body that hangs on a place [ⲙⲁ]”).

Logion 88 as it stands has no discernible relation to what appears before or after it in *Thomas*. It stands, however, at the head of logia 89 through 95, all of which have Matthean parallels in contexts of controversy. As in logia 30 through 41, these logia may be the heavily redacted, even corrupt catena of sayings otherwise known through the Gospel of Matthew. As is also the case with logia 30 through 41, the initial saying of logia 88 through 95 is now corrupt, and thus the redactional motivation for its present placement remains obscure. Logia 90 through 95 treat the themes of seeking and finding, of asking and receiving. Logia 90 and 91 form a dialogue that begins with a promise to find rest; logion 92 begins with the assurance that those who seek shall find. The phrase “you shall find” (ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲉ ⲉ) in logion 90 connects lexically with its synonym ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲛⲉ, identically inflected in logion 92 as the second plural of the first future tense. Logia 91 through 94 may be strung together on the basis of two words that sound alike: ⲱⲓⲛⲁ is the Coptic rendering of the Greek particle ἵνα, translated as ⲟⲓⲛⲁ in the Sahidic dialect, but with an initial *shai* (thus, ⲱⲓⲛⲁ) in sub-Achmimic. ⲱⲓⲛⲁ is homonymous with the autochthonous Coptic verb “to seek” (ⲱⲓⲛⲉ). ⲱⲓⲛⲁ appears in logion 91, ⲱⲓⲛⲉ in logion 92, ⲱⲓⲛⲁ in logion 93, and ⲱⲓⲛⲉ in logion 94. The formal relationship between logia 93, 94, and 95 is difficult to assess owing to lacunae between the end of logion 93 and the beginning of logion 94 in the text as it now exists. The codex has an interposing leaf, uninscribed on either side, between the third and fourth word in logion 99;<sup>19</sup> what this may mean for the text is impossible to know. Because logion 95 does not begin with ⲡⲉⲩⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲉ, I read it as a continuation of logion 94. Perhaps the negative imperative of the verb “to give” (ⲙⲡⲣⲓ) in logia 93 and 95 caused *Thomas* to concatenate the two compound logia (93/94 and 95/96).

Logion 96 is the first of three sayings (96, 97, and 98) introduced by the phrase, “The kingdom of the Father is like” (ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲙⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲥⲧⲛⲧⲱⲛ). Logion 96 concludes with the refrain that is familiar to every student of the Synoptic tradition, “The one who has an ear (ⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉ), let him hear.” Like logion 33, the Synoptic trope here evidences the redactor’s penchant for puns on the word ⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉ. Logion 97 is a parable that likens the kingdom of the Father to a woman carrying a jar full of meal. The handle of the jar, its ⲙⲁⲁⲩⲉ, breaks, and the meal spills out behind her. She returns home from her long journey to find the broken jar empty. The woman had unknowingly wasted the precious sustenance for which she had worked so hard and traveled so far. She comes to this sad state of

<sup>19</sup> Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex*, 86.

affairs because she does not have an ear, a  $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{E}$ , to hear. Perhaps the sapiential wit here is lost in the translation, but the double entendre is amusing if one has ears to hear it.

Logia 98 and 99, in any case, comprise a dialogue held together lexically by the phrase “kingdom of the Father” and the word  $\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{Y}$ , which occurs as the verb,  $\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{Y}$  (“wanting”) in logion 98 and as the noun  $\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{Y}$  (“will”) in logion 99. This last logion, in turn, is related to logia 100 and 101 by the common theme of appropriate allegiances to family (logion 99), government (logion 100), and parents (logion 101). Logia 102 through 105 appear disconnected. There may have been a lexical link among logia 101, 102, and 103, but the lacunae in this part of the text make any reconstruction of such connections speculative. Even when the gaps are filled with likely restorations, certainty is elusive. In logion 103 Bentley Layton has restored the fourth word in line 9 of folio 50 as  $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{O}$  (“his kingdom”), but, according to his own observations of the script, the dubious seventh letter of the word could be a  $\mathfrak{G}$  as well as the  $\mathfrak{E}$  he posits in his restoration.<sup>20</sup> If the letter in question is read as a  $\mathfrak{G}$ , the word could be restored as  $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{G}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{M}$  (“his strength”). The clause would not be, therefore, “he may get up, muster his domain ( $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{O}$ ), and arm himself.” Instead, it would read, “he may arise, gather his strength ( $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{G}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{M}$ ), and arm himself.” Following this alternative reading, those who invite Jesus to pray and fast with them in logion 104 are those who respond to the saying in logion 103 as a counsel to spiritual vigilance. They assume that this spiritual vigilance gains intensity from ascetic discipline, an assumption that Jesus repudiates. Reading logia 103 and 104 together as a dialogue, this complex logion is lexically connected to logion 105 by the word  $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{N}$  (“know, acknowledge, recognize”).

The *Stichwörter* are easier to trace from logia 105 through 114.

- 105.  $\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{E}$  (“the child”)
- 106.  $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{E}$  (“the children”)  
 $\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{E}$  (“the man”)
- 107.  $\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{E}$  (“a man”)  
 $\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{P}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{Y}$  (“until he found [ZE] it”)
- 108.  $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{E}$  (“my way [ZE]”)  
 $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{P}$  (“those which are hidden”)
- 109.  $\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{P}$  (“being hidden”)  
 $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{E}$  (“he found”)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 90.

110. ΠΕΝΤΑϠΓΙΝΕ  $\overline{\text{M}}$  ΠΚΟCΜΟC (“the one who has found the world”)  
 111. ΠΕΤΑϠΕ . . . ΠΚΟCΜΟC (“the one who shall find . . . the world”)  
 112. ΕΤΑΨΕ (ΕΤΟΨΕ) (“which hangs [αΨΕ]”)  
 113.  $\overline{\text{N}}$  ΑΨ ΝϠΟΟϠ (“when”)  
       ΕΙCϠΗΗΤΕ . . . Τ $\overline{\text{M}}$ ΝΤΕΡΟ (“behold . . . the kingdom”)  
 114. ΕΙCϠΗΗΤΕ . . . Τ $\overline{\text{M}}$ ΝΤΕΡΟ (“behold . . . the kingdom”)

The text weaves together words of like sound and like meaning. The word “hidden” appears in both logia 108 and 109; but the two logia also share the word ϠΕ, which is translated “way” in logion 108 and as the verb “find” in logion 109. Logia 109 through 111 discuss finding things: treasure, the world, oneself. Here too, is the vocabulary of finding, the verb “find” rendered as ϠΕ Ε in logia 109 and 111 and ΓΙΝΕ in logion 110. Logion 111 concludes with an unusual addendum, which I render as, “Does not Jesus say that the one who finds him [Jesus] alone, the world is not worthy of him?” Lambdin notes that the text is possibly corrupt here,<sup>21</sup> and this may account for the absence of a discernible connection between logion 111 and the dialogue that follows in logia 112 through 114. The materials of this logia complex may have come together as a result of the aural similarity of the relative clause ΕΤΟΨΕ (“which depends”) and the word ΑΨ in the phrase ΑΨ  $\overline{\text{N}}$ ϠΟΟϠ. The orthography obscures the alliteration here: the relative clause would be written ΕΤΑΨΕ in “standard” Sahidic, and so not only sounds like but visually resembles ΑΨ in the phrase ΑΨ  $\overline{\text{N}}$ ϠΟΟϠ in logion 113. Indeed ΕΤΑΨΕ, and not ΕΤΟΨΕ, appears in logion 87. Thus logia 112, 113, and 114 comprise the concluding dialogue of the *Gospel*, which ends with Jesus having the last, enigmatic word.

## ■ Conclusion

The *mots clés* I have delineated are the key to the mysterious compositional rationale of the wisdom book entitled *Gospel of Thomas*. In *Thomas* one finds snippets of narrative, parallel parables with different punchlines, compound logia as dialogues, and remnants of earlier sayings collections. Paul Ricœur once observed that although “[w]isdom finds its literary expression in wisdom literature . . . wisdom also surpasses every literary genre.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Ricœur, “Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation,” in Lewis Mudge, ed., *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 85.

In *Thomas*, the medley of forms surpasses genre. The organizing principle of the sapiential sayings collection ostensibly has little rhyme or reason; but on closer inspection, it proves to have, if not rhyme, at least alliteration and assonance. Its reason, the *logos* of these *logoi sophon*, as James Robinson has taught us to call them,<sup>23</sup> is the metalogical mesh of lexical links and matching motifs of this “odd sequence” that constitutes the sayings of the *Gospel of Thomas*.

<sup>23</sup> Title of both the *Gattung* and the classic essay by James M. Robinson, “LOGOI SOPHŌN: on the Gattung of Q,” in James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 71–113.

# Words and Deeds: Jesus as Teacher and Jesus as Pattern of Life\*

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**T**he theme of this special issue is “Jesus’ Sayings in the Life of the Early Church.” I wish to expand the theme slightly to “Jesus’ Sayings and Deeds in the Life and Appeal of the Early Church.” I add the word “deeds” because the two concepts of words and deeds are intimately linked in the classical tradition and the culture in which Christianity arose. I have added the word “appeal” because this article will present a chain of events indicating how the words and deeds of Jesus, as emulated by Christians, strongly appealed to the Greco-Roman world.

It is useful to begin with a few observations about Jesus and the sayings tradition that arose around him. First, Jesus’ biographers clearly understood him to be, and presented him as, a wise teacher. Some of the earliest Christian texts are collections of his sayings. The Gospel of Luke portrays

\* I have recently completed a book about what it meant to be an ideal person in the ancient world, and how that set of concepts helped early Christians to construct their various interpretations of Jesus and to establish the pattern of their own lives (*One Jesus—Many Christs* [San Francisco: Harper, 1997]). Everyone has had the privilege at one time or another of meeting individuals who have approached some of those ideals. I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to Professor Helmut Koester for years of instruction, mentoring, and friendship. Of candidates for such a class of people, he is on my short list.



him as a spokesman for personified heavenly Wisdom (Luke 11:49), while Matthew actually makes an identification between the two: Jesus is Heavenly Wisdom on earth (Matt 23:34). In the following century the early Christian movement presented itself as a school of philosophy and Jesus as the founder of a philosophical sect.<sup>1</sup> Outsiders also saw much the same thing, although in a more negative light: Lucian called Jesus a sophist,<sup>2</sup> and other opponents criticized his teachings as unexceptional.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian (ca. 200 CE) declares that unbelievers “think that our business is surely no divine affair, but rather a kind of philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> So the role of Jesus as teacher was seen to be a fundamental part of his identity.

Second, despite Jesus’ depiction as a wise teacher, surprisingly few of his teachings survive. One can read through the sayings that scholars attribute to the historical Jesus in fifteen minutes or so, and the total number of all of the sayings ascribed to him from the first century in little more than twice that time. Many philosophers in antiquity left behind much more. By way of comparison, consider the quantity of words of Socrates or Cicero. This is not a mere accident of preservation that has caused texts to vanish over time. When Christians wanted to preserve things, they were remarkably industrious: for example, nearly five thousand Greek manuscripts of all or part of the New Testament still exist. Yet the sum of words currently attributed to Jesus can be read in approximately thirty minutes.

Third, that small number of sayings was curiously plastic and malleable. The same saying is used by one author in one context with one meaning and then by another with a different meaning. Think, for example, of the various significations of: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,” in its nearly half-dozen different appearances in early Christian literature.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the wording of a saying may be modified to say something different. Compare “blessed are you poor” in Luke 6:20 with “blessed are the poor in spirit” in Matt 5:3. Christian prophets speaking by the spirit of Jesus likewise composed new sayings and attributed them to the risen Christ. So Paul speaks of the gathering of the Christians in the air with the returning Lord at the trumpet of God and the voice of the archangel (1 Thess 4:15–17). Lastly, new sayings arose expressing the distinctive doctrines of a particular variety of

<sup>1</sup> Variations on this theme include: “our philosophy” ( Tatian *Or. Graec.* 31); “the philosophy of the Christians” (Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 2.13.6); “the teacher Christ” (Justin Martyr *1 Apol.* 4).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian *Pergr. mort.* 13.

<sup>3</sup> On Christianity as “nothing wonderful or new,” see Origen *Cels.* 4.11. Even Christians claimed that they were teaching many of the same things as the philosophers. See, for example, Justin 2 *Apol.* 13; *Dial.* 1.3; and Minucius Felix *Octav.* 19.3

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian *Apol.* 46.2.

<sup>5</sup> Mark 14:58; Matt 26:61; John 2:19; Acts 6:14; *Gos. Thom.* 71.

Christianity—a denominational invention, so to speak. Witness the Lukan verse, “No one can be my disciple who does not give up all of their own possessions” (Luke 14:33).

Fourth, as important as the sayings of Jesus were, outside the Gospel literature itself a large number of the most important early Christian texts make little use of them, and many early Christian texts contain none at all. Paul uses or alludes to very few; the deutero-Pauline documents preserved in the canon use none. The same is true for the the general epistles, and in Revelation only the risen Jesus speaks. The situation does not improve as one moves to other Christian texts, the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists, although there are exceptions.<sup>6</sup> Most of these are Christian texts written for other Christians, and most contain little or nothing of the sayings tradition.

One is confronted, therefore, with an apparent paradox: Jesus was a recognized and venerated teacher, yet very few of his sayings were preserved, and even these few survived only in forms that were either malleable or subject to rough handling and frequent neglect. The sayings of Jesus seem to have had less life than one might have expected. Although his teachings were a catalyst that in many ways set the goals and limits of the new faith, they rarely feature in early Christian texts. The energy to fuel the seemingly inexorable rise of the Christian movement, therefore, must have come from another source. That other source is his “deeds,” as I have called them: not the miracles, but the life pattern of Jesus and what that represented in the culture of the ancient observer.

If one turns to the school textbooks of the ancient world, that is, to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, one finds many references to two fundamental virtues expected of the ideal person: wisdom in council and prowess in battle. When Agamemnon and Achilles begin the quarrel that underlies the plot of the *Iliad*, for example, Nestor intervenes and describes them as the two “who surpass all Danaans in council [and] in fighting.”<sup>7</sup> Again, Odysseus upbraids his unruly comrades with the stinging rebuke, “You skulker and coward and thing of no account whatever in battle or council.”<sup>8</sup> These are the two arenas in which men, at least, express the fundamental virtues of the classical tradition. There are of course a number of other important virtues including: hospitality (especially hospitality to strangers), honor and respect for all (especially for one’s betters), and the keeping of an oath. But

<sup>6</sup> Notably, Justin Martyr *I Apol.* 15–19.

<sup>7</sup> *Il.* 1.258. The translations are from Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

<sup>8</sup> *Il.* 2.202–3. For further examples of “council and battle,” compare also, *Il.* 1.491–92; 2.273; 3.150–51; 9.374; 11.630; 12.213–14; 18.106, 252; 19.218.

these two principal virtues—wise words in the council and brave deeds on the field of battle—sum up in a remarkable way the code of ideal behavior.

The latter virtue, the doing of “brave deeds,” needs some clarification, for it is a surprisingly complex value in Greek tradition. It was not equivalent to winning a fight. Odysseus, for example, caught all alone in a near fatal situation in the Trojan war, remarks, “I know it is the cowards who walk out of the fighting, but if one is to win honor in battle, he must by all means stand his ground strongly, whether he be struck down or strike down another.”<sup>9</sup> One could in fact lose a fight and be killed, yet still win a moral victory.

Such a victory did not even have to arise within the context of a battle. The Greeks understood it as enduring to the climax of some fated situation until the achievement of its end; and soon after Homer these virtues reached into the spheres of politics, athletics, and philosophy. Indeed, a lively discussion ensued as to which of these three was superior.<sup>10</sup> In warfare the end was either the death of one’s opponent, a draw, or one’s own death. Other situations, however, also called for great courage: recall Hippolytus, Antigone, or Socrates. Their examples are quite instructive; these exemplars and many others like them faced violent deaths with only verbal defenses, declaring their own innocence and the injustice of their accusers. In all cases—in that of the warrior and that of the innocent victim of injustice, and then of the politician, athlete, and philosopher who appropriated and adapted the same ideals for their own pursuits—the common ground is the endurance of suffering and the ability to face even death with courage.

As a reward for success at fulfilling these ideals in the Homeric poems and long afterward, one might receive one of two kinds of reward: a prize (really a mark of honor commensurate with one’s value) or fame (that is, a reputation among one’s peers that would stand as a memorial after one’s death). Several different Greek words convey this meaning, the two most important of which are γέρα “prize” and κλέος “fame.”

Why, then, is it appropriate to speak of courage and valor in the face of death in a discussion regarding the sayings of Jesus? Scholars sometimes seem to forget that Jesus, in the view of his followers, did exemplify exactly those virtues; this was the pattern of his life. One sometimes refers to the sayings of Jesus as if they were traditional wisdom—mere proverbs—without a person or life story behind them. Although there is a certain warrant for that, and the sayings do seem to have had a life of their

<sup>9</sup>Il. 11.408–10.

<sup>10</sup> Compare Tyrtaeus 9.1–9; Xenophanes 2.1–14; Sophocles *Ai.* 1250–52; Xenophon *Mem.* 1.2.4.

own, the Christian movement centered not on sayings but on a person, and the core of its message was a kind of biography. That biography includes not only powerful sayings but also the narration of a courageous life: the story of a person who faced without flinching a horrible death and then resurrection. It is at this very point that something in the culture of the ancient world and in the story of Jesus made connection. Something motivated people to choose to follow him and be eaten by lions in the local amphitheater, to pattern their lives after his. The difficult element may be understanding what it was that attracted people to the movement and message of Christianity in the first place. What could elicit such a high level of loyalty and commitment in the face of such dire threats and possible penalties? It is no longer obvious that a message claiming that a foreign teacher was crucified in the middle of his life and then resurrected would have captured the imagination of an entire civilization. In the minds of most Romans, it was not admirable to be either foreign or crucified. Yet to understand the Christian appeal in its original context is to begin to see its power to draw to itself not only the poor and disenfranchised but also some of the most highly educated and highly placed members of ancient society.

Was the death of Jesus a defeat or a victory? Answers to that question usually refer to a divide between words and deeds, between the hope and promise of a new kingdom of God and the abject disappointment of his untimely and humiliating death. Some claim that his words promised one thing, while his death showed their promise to be empty. Another assertion, also common, is that “the messenger became the message,” again dividing the message from the messenger’s pattern of life as though the gospel were words alone. Did the martyrs who followed him to their own deaths deserve approbation or not? An inadequate answer—and there certainly was a great debate on what the right or wrong answer was, even in antiquity—will fail to understand not only the actions of the martyrs but also the attractiveness of the Christian mission and subsequent rise of the church.

The appeal lay to no small extent in the fact that Jesus and many early Christians were following the behavior of the figures idealized in the wider culture. They had learned to do so from the stories of their ancestors and from other Christians who encouraged each other to live and die as heroes.

The Roman government and mobs, for their part, grossly misunderstood the new faith. They used rumor, false accusation, and then persecution to stop the rise of the new movement. They accused the Christians of the grossest of immoralities,<sup>11</sup> based in large part on inference from the immo-

<sup>11</sup> Compare especially the account of Christian immoralities in Minucius Felix (*Octav.* 9), based (apparently) on the lost speech against the Christians by M. Cornelius Fronto (ca. 95–166 CE). Athenagoras reduced the charges to the simple phrase “Thyestian feasts and Oedipean intercourse” (*Suppl.* 3.1).

ralities that had in fact existed among the Bacchic revelers who had suffered persecution long before. These tactics appeared successful; they turned people away from the new faith and back to the traditional gods and religions.<sup>12</sup> Yet the behavior of those who died courageously in the courts and arenas, who passed the test with their honor fully intact, made a mockery of the rumors and accusations. The killing of manifestly innocent people sickened both the officials and the observers. Moreover, the courage of those who died held a curious attraction. In one of his most famous (and typically sarcastic) passages, Tertullian places the divine irony in a fishing and agrarian metaphor:

Whatever your cruelty, the next more exquisite than the last, it profits you nothing: it is greater bait to our school. We become more numerous as often as we are measured by you: the blood of Christians is seed.<sup>13</sup>

The Romans cut up Christians like bait, and succeeded only in attracting more “fish” to the church. They sowed Christian blood in the ground, and when they measured the crop, there were more Christians.

In Livy’s historical account of the suppression of the Bacchanalia in 186 BCE, one of the reasons given for rooting out the cult was the effect that immoral behavior had on military valor. We have no record of the actual speech given by the Roman consul to the Senate at the beginning of the action against the Bacchic cult, nor did Livy (59 BCE–17 CE); he was writing more than a century and a half after the events under Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE). Nevertheless, in fine Latin style and according to convention, he puts into the mouth of the governor a speech that reflects the values of his own times, those of the empire. The Roman consul asks:

Do you think, citizens, that young men initiated into this [Bacchic] rite ought to become soldiers? That arms ought to be committed to these men, drafted from this obscene sanctuary? Will these, overwhelmed by their own and others’ disgraceful lewdness, fight with the sword for the chastity of your wives and children?<sup>14</sup>

Romans and all ancients knew well the effect of immorality on one’s character, especially in the critical times of war when the citizens had to

<sup>12</sup> Compare Pliny’s comments on the “positive” results of his persecution: “It is true enough that the temples, until now almost deserted, have begun to be crowded, and the solemn rites, long neglected, are being resumed; and the meat of victims is generally available, a buyer for which was to this point only rarely found. From this it is easy to suppose that a multitude of people may be able to be reformed, if there be place for repentance” (*Epist.* 10.96).

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian *Apol.* 50.13. Here and elsewhere throughout the article the translations are my own, unless specifically stated otherwise.

<sup>14</sup> Livy 39.15.13–14.

fight hand-to-hand and face death with courage or lose everything. This was the justification for the gladiatorial combats: they schooled the citizenry in contempt for death.<sup>15</sup> It was here, in the face of death, that Christians were able to show their real strength. The very values that were most important to the Roman character, those of the soldier, athlete, and philosopher, were the virtues that the Christians demonstrated in their obstinate refusal to sacrifice and their courage in the face of death. The passage from Tertullian continues:

Many among you exhort to tolerance of pain and death, like Cicero in his *Tusculans*, like Seneca in his *Fortuita*, like Diogenes, like Pyrrhon, like Callinicus. And yet their words do not find so many disciples as the Christians do by teaching with deeds. That very "obstinacy" that you reproach is a teacher. For who is not aroused by seeing it to inquire what lies at the base of the matter? Who does not, when they have inquired, approve?<sup>16</sup>

Tertullian carefully distinguishes the mere words of the philosophers from the "teaching with deeds" of the Christians. The Christians were beating the Romans at their own game. Both sides shared the same ideals and culture; Christianity would never have taken hold in the Greco-Roman world had it not. The philosophers that Tertullian named were among the most influential of Greece and Rome and had taught the philosophical basis for the athletic and military ideals of the heroes. Yet the Christians, not the philosophers, were actually able to achieve those ideals and spread them among the common people. Epictetus, Stoic philosopher of the early second century, trying to teach other philosophers to do what they were claiming they should, noted that two types of people were in the habit of having no fear of death and "considering material things as nothing": insane people, and Christians.<sup>17</sup>

Pliny, in his famous letter to Trajan, claimed to have sent Christians to their deaths for no other reason than because "stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely ought to be punished."<sup>18</sup> He denigrated the victims' courage as "obstinacy"; what else could it be, if the state was killing people for it? Martyrdoms thus became "suicides." The Romans could not admit that these were judicial murders. Yet the onlookers could see through the rhetoric and found themselves drawn to what their culture had taught them to

<sup>15</sup> Pliny remarks that such shows properly held would "incite to beautiful wounds and contempt of death, since even in the persons of slaves and criminals love of praise and desire for victory may be discerned" (Pliny *Pan.* 33). Compare Cicero *Tusc.* 2.41.

<sup>16</sup> Tertullian *Apol.* 50.14–15.

<sup>17</sup> Epictetus *Diss.* 4.7.6.

<sup>18</sup> Pliny *Epist.* 10.96.

recognize as their own ideals: the Christians were behaving in the manner of heroes. "Therefore we have conquered," says Tertullian, "when we are killed."<sup>19</sup>

Turn to an earlier text. The Christian audience of the Epistle to the Hebrews lived in a world where many had already died for their faith, including their own leaders (Heb 13:7). The execution of church leaders to terrify the unranked members eventually became a common practice. The whole argument of the book is a contrast between those who had died through disobedience and those who died in faith. The Christians addressed had once been earnest;

[They had formerly] endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting (Heb 10:32-34).

The community had suffered a great deal. The term translated "struggle" is the Greek term *ἀλλησις*, related to a group of words meaning a "contest" for a prize in military, athletic, and philosophical conflicts. Likewise, to be "exposed to abuse" is from a term that Paul used in a similar way in 1 Cor 4:9, when he saw himself as a *θέατρον*, a "spectacle" in the arena. Here it is the passive of *θεατρίζω* ("to be put in the arena"). Both the metaphorical and literal senses of the word are in play here: the people addressed in Hebrews had been "publicly exposed to abuse" because they had assisted those whom the state had arrested and literally sent into the arena. They had begun the "struggle" but, as the writer states, had "need of endurance" (Heb 10:36). The writer summarizes the fundamental argument in a mixture of athletic and military terms:

let us lay aside every encumbrance. . . and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the leader and perfecter of our faith. . . . For consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart (Heb 12:1-3).

With a few obvious changes, such an exhortation could have been said by any soldier in the *Iliad*, encouraging and rousing his men to valor by reference to the examples of their leaders or ancestors.

This heroic model had become common in philosophical and religious language in the intervening centuries. The struggle entailed at times both

<sup>19</sup>Tertullian *Apol.* 50.3.

verbal and physical abuse, and sometimes death; but it was worth the price, because it was a contest for a prize. What was the prize? A passage from Lucian (b. ca. 120) ridiculing Christians (as he does nearly everyone else), states that “the unlucky devils have convinced themselves first off that they will be completely immortal and will live forever, on which account they despise death, and the majority hand themselves over (into custody) willingly.”<sup>20</sup> That is exactly what the author of Hebrews motivated his readers to believe and to do. Jesus had fought this battle and called on his followers to do the same. Then he demonstrated the real cost and depth of commitment by facing down death itself. As the writer of Hebrews describes it, by death he rendered Death powerless (Heb 2:14). As the Gospel of Mark tells the story, he had extended the call to anyone who wanted to become a disciple, to take up his or her cross and follow him (Mark 8:34), “for it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved” (Mark 13:13).

*1 Clement*, dated commonly to 96 CE and written from Rome to the church at Corinth, makes a similar point. The Corinthian church was undergoing a schism, as certain younger members had deposed older and honored leaders. The author writes to warn of the dangers of jealousy and strife, and to secure a reconciliation. To do so, he cites not only biblical models but also “from our generation the noble examples” of those he calls “athletes” (ἀθλητῆς).<sup>21</sup> He uses the example of Peter, who “suffered many toils and so having testified [or “become a martyr”], went to the place of the fame due him.”<sup>22</sup> Paul “pointed out the way to the prize of endurance, and gained the genuine fame of his faith.”<sup>23</sup> Note the “prize” and the “fame.” Clement uses κλέος (“fame”), just as Homer did when invoking the heroic code and the promise to Achilles that if he would die at Troy, he would gain unwilting κλέος.<sup>24</sup> Here Paul gains not merely human but “genuine” κλέος. He, “having testified before the rulers, thus departed from the world and was taken up to the holy place, becoming the greatest model of endurance.”<sup>25</sup> Note the traditional values of endurance of suffering and facing death with courage. The author continues:

To these men. . . were added a great multitude of chosen ones, who, suffering through jealousy many outrages and tortures, became the most noble examples among us. . . . Women, persecuted as Danaids and

<sup>20</sup>Lucian *Pergr. mort.* 13.

<sup>21</sup>*1 Clem.* 5.1.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.* 5.4.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* 5.5–6.

<sup>24</sup>*Il.* 9.411–16.

<sup>25</sup>*1 Clem.* 5.5–7.



Dirces, suffering terrible and unholy mutilations, completed the sure course of the faith and received the genuine reward.<sup>26</sup>

These are the models of the Christian heroes, both men and women, at the end of the first century. Their numbers were considerable, if Clement is to be believed, and we do not know their names or the specifics of their lives and deaths. They died under torture. Some women died in the arenas "as Danaids and Dirces," that is, by being forced to play out the roles of characters who were killed in dramas staged in the arenas. In the Greek myths, the Danaids were killed for murdering their husbands; Dirce was tied to the tail of a wild bull by her two stepsons and dragged to death for mistreating their mother. The examples are heroic, and so is the language. Noteworthy is the final word, "reward." It is the Greek term γέρας, the "prize" given one for valor and a measure of one's worth. Here the Christians contend for and gain, not the pagan but the "genuine" γέρας. Κλέος and γέρας, fame and the prize, the two honors most sought after by the heroes of the epic past, but this time, in the Christian view, the battle was for genuine fame and the real prize. In early Christian conception, Jesus himself, in both word and deed, had gained the prize and secured a way for his followers to do likewise. Their job and the pattern of life that the church was to follow is well expressed in the words of Tertullian:

The battle for us is that we are called forth to the tribunals so that there, at the risk of death, we may fight for the truth. . . . The victory holds both the fame of pleasing God and the prize of living for eternity.<sup>27</sup>

Here is the source of the appeal of the church to the Greco-Roman world. Here are Christians fulfilling the very ideals of the classical tradition, but with a new dimension impossible for Achilles and those of his time: they gained, like their forerunner, the real fame and the genuine prize.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. 6.1-2.

<sup>27</sup>Tertullian *Apol.* 50.2.

# Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations\*

## ■ Marianne Palmer Bonz [Th. D.] *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition*

It is widely acknowledged that Luke-Acts, the largest single literary work in the New Testament, has incorporated a number of stylistic elements and literary motifs from the Septuagint. The precise manner and underlying significance of this appropriation of the Israelite past, however, are issues that have yet to be convincingly resolved. Indeed, although a broad consensus of current scholarship categorizes Luke-Acts as Hellenistic historiography, no major interpretive advances have developed from this particular hermeneutical model since the work of Hans Conzelmann in the 1950s. Conversely, more recent attempts to relate Luke-Acts to historical fiction have foundered on the problem of the inherently trivializing literary perspective of the ancient Greek novel.

This dissertation is a study of the genre and interpretation of Luke-Acts in the light of its contemporary social, literary, and ideological milieu, particularly as these elements are reflected in the Latin epics of the late first century CE and in their famous Augustan prototype, Virgil's *Aeneid*. Literary evidence indicating that Virgil's works had been translated into Greek prose by the middle of the first century makes this line of inquiry

*\*Harvard Theological Review* periodically includes summaries of Harvard doctoral dissertations recently accepted in the Th.D. and Ph.D. programs under the Committee on the Study of Religion, a standing committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences with membership from both that faculty and the Faculty of the Divinity School. Relevant theses from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) are also included.

Dissertations submitted for the Th.D. are deposited in the Andover-Harvard Theological Library at the Divinity School. All the dissertations summarized in this section are available from University Microfilms, Inc.

especially promising. Interpreting Luke-Acts as a prose adaptation of heroic or historical epic provides a hermeneutical model that is both universal in its theological message and essentially popular in its narrative presentation.

Beginning with the question of literary occasion, this study introduces the particular configuration of historical circumstances that produced the foundational epics of both Homer and Virgil, and suggests that the historical situation for the composition of Luke-Acts was closely analogous in certain key respects. After providing a detailed examination of the salient elements of dramatic presentation, function, and interpretation of the *Aeneid* and its direct literary descendants, the generic paradigm of heroic epic is applied to the composition of Luke-Acts, beginning with a detailed exegetical analysis of Acts 2 and ultimately comprising a survey of Luke's two-part work in its entirety. The study concludes that in his dynamic narrative presentation of a divinely ordained mission, which begins with Jesus in Nazareth and ends with Paul in Rome, Luke has endeavored to interpret the underlying meaning of the whole of Christian history—and in a manner surprisingly analogous to Virgil's interpretation of the meaning of Roman history. At the center of Luke's theological reflections is the conviction that the divine solution for human salvation involves not just the death of the beloved Son but the rebirth of the people of God.

### ■ Paul D. Brassey [Th. D.] *Metaphor and the Incomparable God in Isaiah 40–55*

Isaiah 40–55 presents a literary and theological paradox. The text goes to great lengths to declare God's incomparability and to deny the reality of other deities, yet it employs a rich inventory of metaphorical language in describing God, God's actions, and God's relationship with the people Israel. The God who is incomparable, and thus indescribable, is nevertheless described through the use of metaphor. The present study employs modern theories of metaphor in order to understand this metaphorical description of the incomparable God in Deutero-Isaiah. Following an introductory chapter that treats matters of method and the history of scholarship, the second chapter addresses God's incomparability, concluding that God's incomparability is pressed to such a degree that the only non-negative language that remains to describe God is a multiplicity of metaphors.

Chapter three addresses the language of creation as metaphor for deity. The anti-idol polemics provide many terms of human craftsmanship, which are elsewhere transferred metaphorically to God's creative activity. The chapter then studies the metaphorical nature of language describing God's transformations of nature, creation of the cosmos, and the creation of the people Israel, all of which point toward God's spiritual transformation of

Israel. Chapter four analyzes metaphors drawn from the realm of human political relationships. Deutero-Isaiah presents God as a “great king” whose domain is the cosmos, encompassing the nations, Babylon, and, in particular, Cyrus. God is depicted as Israel’s “suzerain,” relating to vassal Israel through covenant.

Chapter five studies the use of kinship language transferred to God. After an analysis of feminine metaphors for deity, the study turns to the depiction of God as the “husband” of personified Jerusalem/Zion. God as “husband” is Zion’s destroyer and rebuilders, her poisoner and restorer, her deserter and rescuer, her seller and redeemer, the cause of her barrenness and the source of her progeny. The concluding chapter summarizes the implications of the metaphorical theology of Deutero-Isaiah, finding that it struggles throughout with a theodicean paradox.

### ■ Cynthia Briggs Kittredge [Th. D.] *The Language of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Reconstruction of Philippians and Ephesians*

This thesis explores the language of obedience in the Pauline tradition. The examination takes place in the context of the discussion of the role of hermeneutical frameworks in reading texts and the nature of Pauline theology. It begins by looking at the work of several influential exegetes and theologians who have discussed obedience, and highlights features of their hermeneutical framework. Their frameworks have several features in common, despite the difference in their interests and methods. Among these are a separation between “obedience” in the genuine and the pseudonymous letters, and the construction of an “other” to whom obedience language is a necessary theological response. The second chapter challenges the separation made by exegetes between language for obedience and for submission. It explores the two expressions, ὑπακούειν and ὑποτάσσεσθαι in the semantic field of obedience in the Greek language of Paul’s time. It finds that both words refer to features of a relationship between subordinate and superordinate in the contexts of military, political, or family subjection. In contrast to the framework of earlier treatments of obedience, the study begins with a conception of early Christian history as a struggle between the vision of equality in the emerging Christian movement and the dominant patriarchal ethos of the Greco-Roman world. The letters of Paul give evidence both of the impulse toward equality and the movement toward patriarchalism. In order to trace the interplay of these articulations, this study employs a method of rhetorical criticism and historical reconstruction. Rhetorical analysis of the argument is used to identify points of tension between different perspectives within the Christian community. Employing this method, the third chapter analyzes the argument of Paul’s letter

to the Philippians and describes the rhetorical situation. It focuses on Paul's adaptation of the Christological hymn of Phil 2:6–11 within his overall argument. The fourth chapter accounts for features observed in the analysis by reading the rhetoric in light of information about the historical and social context of Philippi. Next, the argument of the letter to the Ephesians, a letter whose obedience language is often contrasted with Philippians, is analyzed and the rhetorical situation described. It observes how the author builds an argument by presenting one view of unity and moving the audience to another view. The sixth chapter reconstructs the historical situation of Ephesians by examining the evidence within the New Testament for early Christians who associated baptism and unity with a reevaluation of marriage and by analyzing Ephesians' use of the earlier letter, Colossians. The study concludes by comparing the results of the investigation of Philippians and Ephesians to illustrate the way obedience language functions in two specific instances in early Christian history.

### ■ Timothy S. Laniak [Th. D.] *From the Margin to the Middle: The Pattern of Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*

The following thesis analyzes the social dynamics in the Book of Esther by giving particular attention to the organizing values of shame and honor. A careful reading of the text is followed by a social scientific commentary on selected topics such as revenge, hubris, familial loyalty, power, deception, and the symbolism of clothing. Literary and anthropological approaches mutually reinforce the insights that accumulate throughout the study. The analysis suggests that shame and honor were pivotal concerns for the Jews in the Diaspora. It was not simply the existence of the Jews that was at stake in the story of Esther. It was also their status and reputation. Esther was a heroine for preserving the life and honor of her people. She also became a model for life in the threatened, liminal state of exile.

The story of Esther is read intertextually with other court stories and the psalms of lament. A pattern emerges that describes a Jewish protagonist whose favored state is challenged. The hero undergoes a death-like phase of alienation but eventually moves to a higher status than before. Through a set of social reversals, the accusing enemy is humiliated and the "world" is restored to order.

This interdisciplinary and intertextual approach to the story of Esther highlights themes that, although previously unrecognized, dominate the landscape of the text and the cognitive horizon of its author. The results of this research are offered as a contribution, first to scholarship on the Book of Esther and to the study of Second Temple Judaism, and, secondly, to the anthropological discussion of shame and honor in the Mediterranean region, both past and present.

## ■ Shelley Matthews [Th. D.] *High-Standing Women and Mission and Conversion: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis of the *Antiquities* and Acts*

This dissertation focuses on narratives in Josephus's *Antiquities* and the Acts of the Apostles, which suggest that Gentile women of high standing were prominent among those attracted to early Judaism and Christianity. The analysis of these texts serves as a contribution to the current debate over the nature of mission and conversion in Judaism in antiquity. I first analyze these prominent women as rhetorical figures employed by Josephus and the author of Acts for persuasive purposes. Secondly, I explore what these texts suggest about the actual history of women's involvement in mission and conversion.

This work explores the negative rhetorical function of women in discourse concerning missionary religions in antiquity. I show how Tacitus and Josephus appropriate the topos linking women, "foreign" cults, sexual misconduct, and state subversion in their stories of the expulsion of Jews and Isis worshippers from Rome. By identifying this linkage, I elucidate Josephus's claims in *Antiquities* 18 that the expulsion of both Jews and Isis devotees was due to the duping of Roman matrons of high standing attracted to these two cults.

I then pose the question: Given this negative view of the involvement with missionary religions by women of high standing, why do both Josephus and the author of Acts still advertise the association of elite Gentile women with their respective communities? In answer to this question, I argue that these stories can also serve positive rhetorical functions. To develop this argument, I first show how widespread is the pattern of highlighting the involvement of prominent Gentile women with Judaism. I identify and analyze the several narratives in the *Antiquities* in which elite women serve as Jewish benefactors and saviors, both in imperial and biblical times. I also argue that in the missionary journeys of Paul in Acts, it is specifically Gentile noble women's affiliation with early Christianity that is highlighted. Secondly, I show how the positive rhetorical function of prominent Gentile noble women in the *Antiquities* and Acts can be understood within the framework of elite women's benefaction, and the positive valuation of women's public religious function on behalf of the state in the Graeco-Roman world.

## ■ Rachel C. Rasmussen [Th. D.] *Crown of Creation: Toward a Theology of Birth*

This dissertation argues that the perspective of those who give birth is crucial to a coherent and meaningful interpretation of Christian faith today. This perspective exposes a contradiction between the reliance of Christian theology on the metaphor of childbirth when speaking its gospel and a

theological neglect of the meaning of women's acts of giving birth. A resolution to this contradiction is proposed by using constructivist and feminist-liberationist methods to develop an alternative theological concept of birth.

This dissertation explores the Protestant theological and Western cultural meanings of childbirth as a base from which to reconstruct the concept of birth for theological work. Chapter one argues, through a study of Paul Tillich's thought, that theology has not addressed the human experience of childbirth and why. The second chapter explores a variety of attempts by theologians, who are also mothers, to incorporate the perspective of birthgiving into theological work. Taken together, these chapters indicate the productivity of the inquiry into the meaning of birthgiving for theology and suggest that traditional theological methods and their approaches to the birth symbol are not sufficient for resolving the contradiction at issue. Chapter three takes up constructive and feminist-liberationist methods, therefore, in order to contextualize theological understandings of birth in contemporary society and culture through an overview of the social history of childbirth in the United States. Chapter four investigates a sample of accounts of birth, both religious and secular, narrated by contemporary mothers. Chapter five then develops from this material an alternative feminist and midwific concept of childbirth as the basis for a resolution to the contradiction in the theological approach to the symbol of birth. A concept of the divine is constructed out of the image of the creative tensions of parturition, both physically and socially understood, and demonstrates that women's acts of birthing provide an appropriate and significant image with which to reimagine the meaning of divine creativity and incarnation. The dissertation therefore calls for a revision of theological practices that are based on the neglect of the perspective of birthgiving.

### ■ Carey Ellen Walsh [Th. D.] *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible*

This dissertation reconstructs the practice of viticulture in Israelite agriculture from analysis of the biblical traditions of the vine, vineyards, and wine, and the archaeological evidence of wine presses, jugs, epigraphic notations, paleobotanical finds from Iron Age (1200–586 BCE) Syria-Palestine. My thesis is that viticulture, no less than drinking, is a cultural marker that shaped the social sphere of Israelite practitioners.

Chapter 1 begins with a summary of the history of viticulture in Syria-Palestine and the role of alcohol in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Next follows a discussion of the geographic conditions and agricultural calendar of ancient Israel. Chapter 2 is a discussion of the sociology of the vintner. It includes an examination of the archaeological evidence for Israelite farm-

ing inclusive of horticulture: the Gezer calendar, domestic architecture, and the Samaria ostraca. Section two contains a discussion of the primary labor pool of the farm, that is, the family. A third section focuses on the custom of patrimonial inheritance.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the cultivation of the grape vine, from starting a vineyard, to tilling the soil, to planting and training the vines, to the measures taken to protect the vineyard. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the two primary installations of the vineyard, viz., the towers and of the variety of wine presses found in sites and through field survey.

Chapter 5 is a reconstruction of the grape harvest and wine production. The first section details the harvesting and collection of grapes. The second section focuses on the celebrative aspects of the vintage. Section three details the chemical process involved in fermentation, while section four is an analysis of all the different terms for wine in biblical and epigraphical materials. Chapter 6 is a study on wine consumption from daily sustenance to the important role of the banquet in family life.

### ■ Demetrius Kelvin Williams [Th. D.] *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: A Rhetorical Analysis of the "Theology of the Cross" in Conflict in Paul's Philippian Correspondence*

The Apostle Paul was engaged continuously in acts of persuasion. Sometimes these discussions were heated and passionate. This was the nature of the political and religious atmosphere of the Hellenistic and Roman public arena of which Paul was a product. Some of his letters attest to the competitive nature of the religious arena in the ancient Mediterranean world. In such an arena the Paul of history was not accorded the same privilege as the Paul of churchly tradition or legend. The Paul of history was faced with competitors, many of whom shared in the Christian experience of faith but differed as to the foundational assertions of that faith. This dissertation explores the nature and content of Paul's rhetorical response to such a challenge, with particular reference to his theology of the cross in Philippians 3.

Employing the method of rhetorical criticism, this study explores the manner in which Paul structures a deliberative argument using his understanding of the cross to combat his opponenets, defend his community, and construct his notion of the eschatological community. The method of rhetorical criticism provides tools for examining how Paul was engaged regularly in acts of persuasion and dissuasion, and it also provides an analytical basis for articulating how the theology of the cross and the terminology of the cross ("cross," σταυρός, "crucify," σταυρώ) was utilized in his polemical contests. Much of current scholarship constructs Paul's theology of the cross with little regard for the exigencies out of which his letters



emerged. This study proposes that Paul's theology of the cross is expressed most persuasively in his contests with his competitors. Inasmuch as this exigency is an important factor for exploring the significance of Paul's understanding of the cross, it is possible to discern his theology of the cross and the purposes that it served in his own life and in the life of the communities he established.

This dissertation seeks to make a contribution to Pauline theology by focusing on Paul's use of the terminology of the cross and its function within the debate with his opponents in Philippians 3. It further suggests that the phrase "theology of the cross" is a scholarly term that represents a theological perspective expressing Paul's understanding of the meaning and significance of the suffering and death of Christ. Whereas conventional approaches used the contests of Paul as opportunities to explore the identity, tradition, and theology of his opponents, this study focuses on Paul's argumentation, thereby providing a clearer view of the function of Paul's theology of the cross and of his use of cross terminology in conflict with his opponents.

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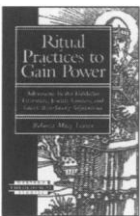
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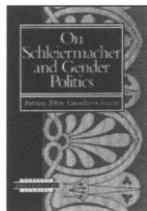
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